Week ending April 20 1957 *Every Wednesday Fourpence*

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Wally Wyles escapes from a morass of work in a boat

IT is many years now since Wally Wyles went poaching. But the memory of those days returned when he illustrated Norah Burke's latest story, *Island Of Birds*, which begins on page 12. Outwitting gamekeepers—he was shooting duck—was just part of growing up as a mischievous and adventure-loving youngster in his native Kent.

Today, however, Wyles is a thoroughly law-abiding citizen. He was fourteen when he decided to become an artist. "It was all I was ever interested in, though my father tried to make me become a gardener." Instead he went to art school, and now, fifteen years later, he is able to point proudly to the fact that his pleasant house in Maida Vale, London, has no garden at all.

Wyles works in a studio which has been used by an imposing procession of successful artists. "My immediate successor," he says, "looks like being my son Nick." Aged two, Nick is already showing a disconcerting inclination to break pencils, throw paint about and be generally artistic, while his father attempts to cope with his "morass of work."

Mother, meanwhile, deals with their youngest son, who is six weeks old. Margaret Wyles was an actress. When it came to painting her Wyles found that "relatives make the worst models." They do come in useful, however, when Wyles is fitting out the thirty-foot boat that he intends to sail from Dover in the summer. Once a month he and his friends charter an eight-ton yacht. "It's away from telephones, and nobody can bother me."

But he makes no claims to being a yachtsman. So when last year the auxiliary motor broke down in the Solent during a Force Five gale, he was wishing that his yacht had a telephone.

ON page 17, John Ennis discusses the cost of Easter—and finding the facts and figures was an intriguing task for Ennis and JOHN BULL's research staff.

Ennis was surprised, for instance, to find that business men are "very cagey" about their trade figures. "I couldn't get one chocolate manufacturer to tell me how many Easter eggs he produced."

Checking attendance figures at Belle Vue Pleasure Gardens, Manchester, Ennis learned that a stock of 30,000 Willow-pattern plates, cups and saucers had recently been unearthed in a store. They had been there unnoticed for sixty years.

A National Savings Movement official had some startling information to give, but was baffled about its significance. When Ennis tried to compare Easter withdrawal figures with those of other periods he found that there is no such thing as an average week for savings. In the first week of January deposits exceeded withdrawals by £4,453,000. A week later the surplus was £92,000. "It shows how long New Year resolutions last," he says.

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Gordon's

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Free Speech

- **The problem of woodworking wives**
- **Caught in a capsized ship**
- **Who pays when you dial "999"?**

My wife thought she was being very daring and original when she decided to attend woodwork classes at a London evening institute.

She said she would do anything to get out of knitting, which she hates. But when she attended her first class she found that the women outnumbered the men by ten to two.

The prospect ahead fills me with horror. I was never very good at woodwork and my wife has already taken over half my workshop and finished a rather intricate coffee table which she designed herself.

I can think of no reason why I should not now turn the whole of my workshop and tool kit over to her, yet the logical sequel to this worries me.

I can't stand knitting either.—M. M., Poplar, London.

Yawning Problems

I, too, used to believe that yawns were due to oxygen deficiency ("Free Speech," March 30) but I now believe that this is not the whole story.

A person inclined to yawn in company stops doing so when he starts playing indoor games, although the atmosphere may actually become stuffier.

Sluggishness and boredom seem to be the chief offenders and the antidote appears to be a change of occupation naturally provided by stretching the limbs or yawning.—R. Anderson, Allen Road, Peterborough, Northamptonshire.

Amateur Professionals

C. D. Robinson says that an unqualified person is not allowed to practise as a solicitor or dentist ("Free Speech," March 23). But this is not strictly accurate.

If John Smith gives permission to Bill Brown to pull his teeth and look

after his legal affairs—or his duodenal ulcer for that matter—he is quite entitled to do so.

These august professions have long given the impression that they alone have some divine right to practise their arts and skills.

This is not so. Anyone can have a go.—P. Phillipson, Howe Street, Gateshead, Co. Durham.

"As long as he didn't hold himself out to be a professional, Bill Brown might undertake legal or medical work and get away with it," says a lawyer. "He would probably be in trouble if anything went wrong—particularly if he had taken money for his services.

"But if he practises any form of dentistry he could be prosecuted by the Dental Council and be liable to penalties of up to £500 under the Dentists Act."

Gifts From The Sky

Last spring a brand new toothbrush in a plastic case fell at my feet as I passed beneath some tall fir trees in which rooks were building nests. This year a small orange hair-comb fell as I was passing the same spot. I wonder what I will get next?—W. Cook, Muriel Road, Waterlooville, Hampshire.

"Possibly a golf ball," says the Natural History Museum. "Rooks and other members of the crow family often carry these off in mistake for eggs. Tame birds frequently steal strange objects as a substitute for gathering food or nesting material, although wild birds are less likely to do this."

Pleasure Trove

I was interested to read about the firemen who liked to play with water ("Free Speech," March 23).

My mother has offered me and my husband a wardrobe which contains a great jumble of moth-eaten, rusty and broken old toys over twenty years old.

But to talk of putting them in the dustbin is sacrilege. My husband and his father gloat over them as though they were real treasures.—Mrs. R. E., Hull.

Discourteous Customers

Shop assistants are always being urged to show courtesy towards customers, but it's about time some of the customers were courteous too.

After spending thirty minutes looking for a cleaning order which one of them insisted that she had sent, I got in touch with another firm and found that she was their customer and not ours.

But when I pointed this out she rudely asked me why I hadn't told her before instead of wasting her time. —Miss J. Roseburgh, Plymouth, Devonshire.

Open To Views?

Many contractors already leave a peep-hole in the boarding surrounding building sites so that onlookers can see what is going on.

In view of the keen comment and earnest criticism one hears from the crowd it would also be a good idea if contractors supplied a suggestions book and a supply of sharpened pencils as well.

There are hundreds of people only too willing to put them right.—F. J. Nash, Hayes Chase, West Wickham, Kent.

Incarcerated Captain

The story of five men found alive after being trapped for five days inside the hull of a capsized ship ("Strange Tales Of The Sea," John Bull, March 9) has a parallel.

On April 30, 1910, the Norwegian sailing ship Aurora sighted the capsized hull of the eighty-ton sloop Erndte and took it in tow to Danzig. There workmen started to cut an opening in the plates and found the captain still alive inside.

He had been trapped for twelve days.—J. Furber, Dingle Avenue, Denton, Manchester.

Not Standing For It

Mrs. F. G. T., of Stoke-on-Trent, says that she often has to stand in buses crowded with chivalrous modern men ("Free Speech," March 30). As a young man, I am perfectly willing to give up my seat to the aged, infirm and women with babies.

But I don't know why I should be expected to do so for fit matrons who stand gazing into space with well-practised airs of martyrdom.

Nowadays, as a rule, women live longer than men. Possibly this is because the misguided gentlemen of previous generations were either browbeaten by the battleaxe or beguiled by the beautiful into surrendering their seats.

I am a prospective centenarian.—H. B., Leeds, Yorkshire.

Foxing The Hounds

The description of odours cancelling each other out ("Selling Through The Nose," John Bull, March 16) reminds me of a big dog fox which made a beeline for about twelve sows grazing in a field near my home.

He ran straight through them—they paid no attention to him—and

seconds later the first hounds of the local hunt arrived. The sows milled round and the hounds lost the scent.

Eventually they picked it up again after circling the pigs, but the fox had a good start. I wonder if he did this deliberately.—Mrs. E. Reid, Longhorsley, Morpeth, Northumberland.

"He probably knew what he was doing," says the Natural History Museum. "Foxes have even been known to run over the backs of sheep, through streams and along the tops of walls to throw hounds off the scent."

Balling The Wool

Why isn't knitting wool always sold in balls instead of skeins? It's usually the non-interested parties who get the job of helping to wind.—Miss E. I. Stromberg, Tunstall Road, Sunderland, Co. Durham.

"Balling is an extra process and the equipment is expensive to install initially," says a manufacturer. "But most top quality branded wools are already sold in balls and manufacturers of the heavier and cheaper grades are tending to follow suit."

Emergency Costs

The reference by R. K., of Rochdale, to the "999" emergency telephone service makes me wonder who pays.

Do the fire, police and ambulance authorities pay the General Post Office or does the G.P.O. absorb the cost?—M. Jones, Rhydypenau Road, Cardiff.

"Emergency calls made from private telephones are, of course, paid for by the subscriber," says the G.P.O. "But we bear the cost of those made from public call-boxes."

Adult Education

No wonder some people stay in a rut all their lives.

As manager of a small steelworks I was talking this morning to a man who had worked in the power house for forty years.

I found that he had never taken the trouble to walk thirty yards to see what was going on in the main mill opposite, and I was so shaken by this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

that I minded his motors for a few minutes and sent him over to look.

"So that's how we do it," he said when he came back.—M. R. G., Sheffield.

Primrose Protector

You can stop sparrows biting the heads off primroses, crocuses and other spring flowers ("Free Speech," March 30) by spraying the flowers with a weak solution of alum. The birds don't seem to like this.—MRS. A. NOKES, Alma Street, Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

Warning To Smokers

The police officer on traffic control who gets enveloped in fumes from heavy trucks ("Free Speech," March 23) should take action under paragraph 79 of the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations, 1955. I, too, am a police officer and have had the same experience.

Such emissions are an offence if they are caused by lack of maintenance or by the way in which the

vehicle is driven. The primary causes include lack of adjustment of the fuel injectors and driving in too high a gear.—E. H., Cheshire.

Hounding Out

The yawning dog belonging to G. H., of Bromley, Kent ("Free Speech," March 30) makes me wonder whether dogs have an extra sense.

I am a park keeper, and whenever I approach a loose dog to shoo it out it turns tail as soon as it sees me, although I never pick up a stone or brandish a stick.—R. A. WILLIAMSON, Bideford Road, Stockport.

"Shoot And Be Damned!"

There is one tale of the sea that has always left a strong impression on my mind. In 1917 the British merchant ship Thracia was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Bay of Biscay.

She went down in little more than a minute and the only survivor was a sixteen-year-old boy left clinging to a capsized lifeboat.

As he drifted past the surfaced submarine its crew shouted at him. But when one of them raised a rifle and took aim the boy yelled: "Shoot and be damned to you!" The shot was not fired, and sixteen hours later he was picked up by a French destroyer.

His name, if I remember correctly, was Cadet Douglas Duff. Can he be the Commander Duff responsible for JOHN BULL'S "Strange Tales Of The Sea" series?—E. A. WORTHY, Bridle Avenue, Wallasey, Cheshire.

"This was indeed my first shipwreck," says Commander Duff; "and until last year I thought I was the sole survivor. Now I am trying to get in touch with Marine Moss, one of her gunners who, I hear, is still living in Britain.

"Don't think too severely of the U-boat captain. He was only trying to get information for his report."

Why Dilamgerbendi Insula?

We don't need to go as far as Wagga Wagga, Australia, or Popocatapetl, Mexico, for peculiar place-names.

A few minutes' study of a six-inch ordnance survey map of the New Forest area, Hampshire, revealed the following: Short's Parlour, Mouse's Cupboard, Stinking Edge Wood, Gringo's Copse, Standing Hat, Crab Hat, Little Dark Hat, Lazy Bushes, Pig Bush, Three Boys Bushes, Yearnagates Nap, Paddy Bussey's Firs, Dunces Arch and Rowbarrow Droke.

There is also Slap Bottom, a little north of Christchurch and, to end on a mystery note, what can be the meaning of Dilamgerbendi Insula, which is near Picket Post?—W. J. LANE, Eynham Avenue, Bitterne, Southampton, Hampshire.

"We also have Anthony's Bees Bottom," says H. L. Edlin, a former New Forest district officer. "The bottoms are small valleys usually called after people who lived nearby or kept animals there. Dilamgerbendi Insula is an island of land in the forest and I suspect that the name is a bit of a joke."

Cheating Time

I have a friend who always keeps his watch five minutes fast. He says this enables him to be on time for his appointments, and he likes to look at the time in the morning and calculate that he can spend another five minutes in bed.

This form of quaint self-deception puzzles me.—C. F. MAW, Alexandra Park, Nottingham.

"Habits of self-deception like this are so common as to be almost universal," says a psychologist. "People know that they can't really cheat time, but they enjoy the illusion of doing so. Others deceive themselves about space, believing, for example, their houses to be larger or smaller than they really are."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

EVERYBODY loves a wedding. It doesn't matter if they're old or young, nostalgic or just hopeful—no one can quite resist that flash of bridal white and the flutter of rose petals and confetti. It's always surprising, too, that so many people just happen to be passing by. But cover artist Batchelor knows how that short walk after lunch can last until teatime when his wife sees a church on the route. "I get pretty irritable," he admits, "as I'm made to wait outside. But once the bride appears—well, it makes me glad I didn't live up to my name."

How they love that Pepsi feeling

Why are so many people drinking Pepsi-Cola? Because Pepsi is the modern drink — quick, light, delicious. And — Pepsi leaves you brighter than it found you. So wherever you are, whoever you're with, ask for a Pepsi — the drink with *refreshment plus*.

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6/6 *in cotton rib*

7/6 *in cotton mesh*

THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR

Rose wanted the Fosters to dinner. A pity . . . the evening could have been so exciting

by ***URSULA VESEY HILL***

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

IN the year 1900 Wimbledon was a pleasant place in which to live. The houses bordering the Common were solid and spacious. Even from the outside it was easy to visualize the well-proportioned rooms with blazing fires and heavy velvet curtains, the polish on the massive furniture and the smell of rich, highly seasoned food.

In two such houses, each standing back in its well-kept garden, lived Mr. and Mrs. Foster and Mr. and Mrs. Bristow. . . .

At The Laurels, Rose Bristow was in her bedroom dressing for dinner. She always enjoyed this hour. She loved the room itself, the white satin-stripe wallpaper, the pale pink carpet and deep matching eiderdown on the double bed, the white fur rug in front of the fire, and the four shaded electric light bulbs.

She sat at her dressing-table and looked at her reflection with contentment, and with reason. Her blue eyes had ice-blue whites and long brown lashes, and her fine-grained skin a delicate pink flush; her hair, piled in shining curls high on her head, was the colour of dark amber.

The door of her husband's dressing-room was open. "Paul," she called, "come and talk. I'm sure you're more ready than I am."

"All right." Paul stood in the doorway, a tall, dark young man, watching her fondly. Then he turned and looked round the room

"If you really want me to wear it," said Rose, "do it up for me." Then they heard a tap at the door

Mrs. Buskin spoke in a quavering voice. "It's me, ma'am," she gasped. "Can Mr. Foster come in? Something's happened . . . something awful"

with pride. "You know," he said, "I believe we were the first people in Wimbledon to have electric light. We won the race for the telephone, too."

She looked at him, smiling. "What a baby you are!"

He said seriously: "I like you to have things before other people, if I can manage it. I'd like to give you everything in the world, Rose." He added, looking in the mirror over her shoulder and arranging his tie: "I wish we were doing something a bit more exciting tonight than having Mary and Tom for dinner."

"You mustn't talk like that," Rose reproved him gently. "I love them coming. Mary is a wonderful person."

"I know she is. Old Tom's all right, too, I suppose." He paused. "You're looking extraordinarily pretty, Rose."

"You wait. I'll look much prettier in a minute." Rose opened a drawer by her dressing-table and took out a flat leather case.

"The necklace I gave you for your birthday?" Paul asked. "No—don't wear that. Wait a minute."

He went back to his dressing-room, opened the small wall safe there, and returned with a larger case lined with dark blue velvet on which a string of pearls lay pale and warm.

"I'm not going to wear those."

"Yes you are. Mary will want to see them."

Rose took the necklace and held it in her hand. She said: "It seems queer, wearing your mother's necklace just to dine at home. I wonder if she'd really mind my wearing them at all? I think she must have felt sad that she had no daughter to leave them to. They're so beautiful."

"Nonsense!" Paul said indignantly. "She was very fond of you. And one day you'll leave them to our son's wife."

"Our son is taking his time about appearing."

"He'll turn up one day."

"I hope so," Rose said. She went on seriously: "I wish Mary had a child. I don't believe they'll ever have one now. She feels it terribly." She held out the necklace. "Here—if you really want me to wear it, do it up for me."

As Paul fastened the clasp, there was a tap at the door. Mabel, the house parlour-maid, came in and held out a telegram on a silver salver. Rose took it and tore it open. "Your mother had a slight heart attack. Come tomorrow if you can," she read aloud. "Oh, Paul!"

"All right, Mabel, there's no answer," Paul said. As Mabel went out, he put his arms round his wife. "Darling, your father says it's only a slight attack. She'll be all right. We'll go and see her tomorrow."

"Can you come, too?"

"Of course. That's the best of the Stock Exchange. If you ain't there, you can't lose money."

Rose lifted her face. "You're wonderful to live with," she said. "You never make any difficulties. But even if Mummy is better, we can't get home from Exeter the same night."

"What does that matter? Mrs. Buskin and Mabel can look after the house. Hurry up, Rose. I want my dinner. . . ."

DOWNSTAIRS in the kitchen, the big range was nearly red hot. It was covered with a variety of saucepans, including a fish-kettle which contained a whole turbot. Mrs. Buskin, a short, stout, sandy haired woman, was kneeling at the oven basting a joint of beef. Mrs. Buskin was a superb cook.

"She's got her necklace on and she's had a telegram," said Mabel. "Her ma's sick."

Mrs. Buskin got up from her knees and wiped her face on her apron. "How often have I told you not to call her 'she'? Say 'the mistress.'"

"I don't mean no harm," said Mabel. "You can't go on saying 'the mistress' all the time."

"You will in my kitchen," Mrs. Buskin told her. "What's the matter with her ma?"

"Heart attack."

"She'll get better," said Mrs. Buskin firmly. "Take these cauliflowers into the scullery and strain them. Put your dirty apron on first."

"I'm the parlour-maid, not a kitchen-maid," objected Mabel. But she untied her apron.

"You're nothing yet," Mrs. Buskin told her. "Only half and half. When you're a real parlour-maid, I won't ask you to strain the veg. As it is, hurry up. . . ."

Next door, at The Maples, Mary Foster was sitting by her bedroom fire. She was a slender, dark woman with a ravaged face. She was dressed in an unbecoming shade of brown. Either from indifference or self-effacement, she never made the most of her appearance.

She had a fine brain and, if she had been a man, would have gone to a university and probably entered some profession. As it was, she applied her energies to social work for St. Swithun's Church, and to helping run a home for unmarried mothers and their babies.

Her husband entered the room. Tom Foster was a respected member of an insurance corporation. He was a small, neatly built man with gold-rimmed spectacles and a pouting mouth.

"We ought to be going," he said. "It's twenty-five past seven."

"Is it?" Mary replied indifferently. She stared into the fire. "Tom, could you let me have some money soon? It's for the mothers' home. Expenses are going up. I interviewed a terrible case today. . . ."

"Those damned men!" Tom exclaimed. "I'd give them ten years, if I could." He noticed how she had sunk deep into her chair. "Are you tired, darling?" He was suddenly protective, all his fussiness of manner gone.

She smiled at him. "No, I'm not tired. It's just that sometimes I get depressed by these tragic cases."

"I know, dearest, I know," he soothed her. "But think how many little waifs lead happy and contented lives because of you." Behind his thick spectacles his eyes were soft. "You shall have any money you need. Come along now. Rose will cheer you up. . . ."

Rose showed Mary the telegram.

"I don't think from the wording that she's very ill, Rose," Mary said. "But I'm glad you're going tomorrow. You'll feel happier if you see for yourself." Her voice was sympathetic. "Try not to worry."

They went in to dinner. Mabel put a silver tureen of mulligatawny soup in front of Paul. With a heavy silver ladle he poured it into enormous soup plates. Tom began spooning the soup into his mouth with noise and gusto.

I do wish he wouldn't, Rose thought. *Why doesn't Mary say something when they're alone?* Then she realized that Mary would never say anything that implied criticism of anyone she loved. Instead she would train herself not to notice, ignoring the fault until it became invisible to her.

Mary bent forward. "I think your necklace is quite lovely," she said. "Isn't it, Tom?"

Tom looked at the necklace carefully. "I don't know much about pearls. They look magnificent to me. Must be worth a fortune."

"They are," said Paul, cutting slices from the turbot. "They belonged to my grandmother. We've always had them heavily insured."

"Paul!" said Rose suddenly. "I don't like leaving the servants alone in the house when we're out tomorrow. Not with this necklace. Two unarmed women——"

"Nonsense, darling," Paul said. "What possible harm can they come to? Every window has heavy wooden shutters with iron bars. Besides, if I were a burglar, I'd hate to take on Mrs. Buskin." He added, more seriously: "And anyway, if anything should happen, they've got the telephone."

"Yes," replied Tom. "They could ring us up." He turned to Mabel, who was handing a large sauce boat of shrimp sauce. "Tell Mrs. Buskin that if anything worries her while Mr. and Mrs. Bristow are away, she must ring me up at once."

Mabel said: "Thank you, sir." She thought: *She won't half be in a spin with the telephone. She don't know how.*

Suddenly Rose took off the pearls. "I'm nervous, Paul," she said. "Put them back, please. The case is on my dressing-table."

Paul smiled indulgently, got up, and took the necklace back to the bedroom. He put it in its case and replaced the case in the safe.

When dinner was over, Rose and Mary took coffee in the drawing-room, leaving their husbands to their port and cigars.

Though they were old friends, Paul and Tom had little in common. After a good dinner, Paul would have liked to have talked about racing or the latest musical comedy, swap a few good stories and finish with an exchange of opinions on the stock market.

These things didn't interest Tom. His main interests, outside his work, were carpentry and church affairs—he was a churchwarden at St. Swithun's.

When, after a long monologue about the state of the church roof, Tom excused himself briefly to wash his hands, Paul got up, too, ready to join the ladies as soon as Tom came back. . . .

Next morning Paul showed Mrs. Buskin how to use the telephone, which was on the wall in the hall. He made her unhook the earpiece, turn the handle, and ask for the Fosters' number. Mrs. Buskin's face was red and her voice very nervous. Mary answered and talked to her for a few minutes, complimenting her on the dinner of the night before and telling her to ring up any time she wanted to. Then she hung

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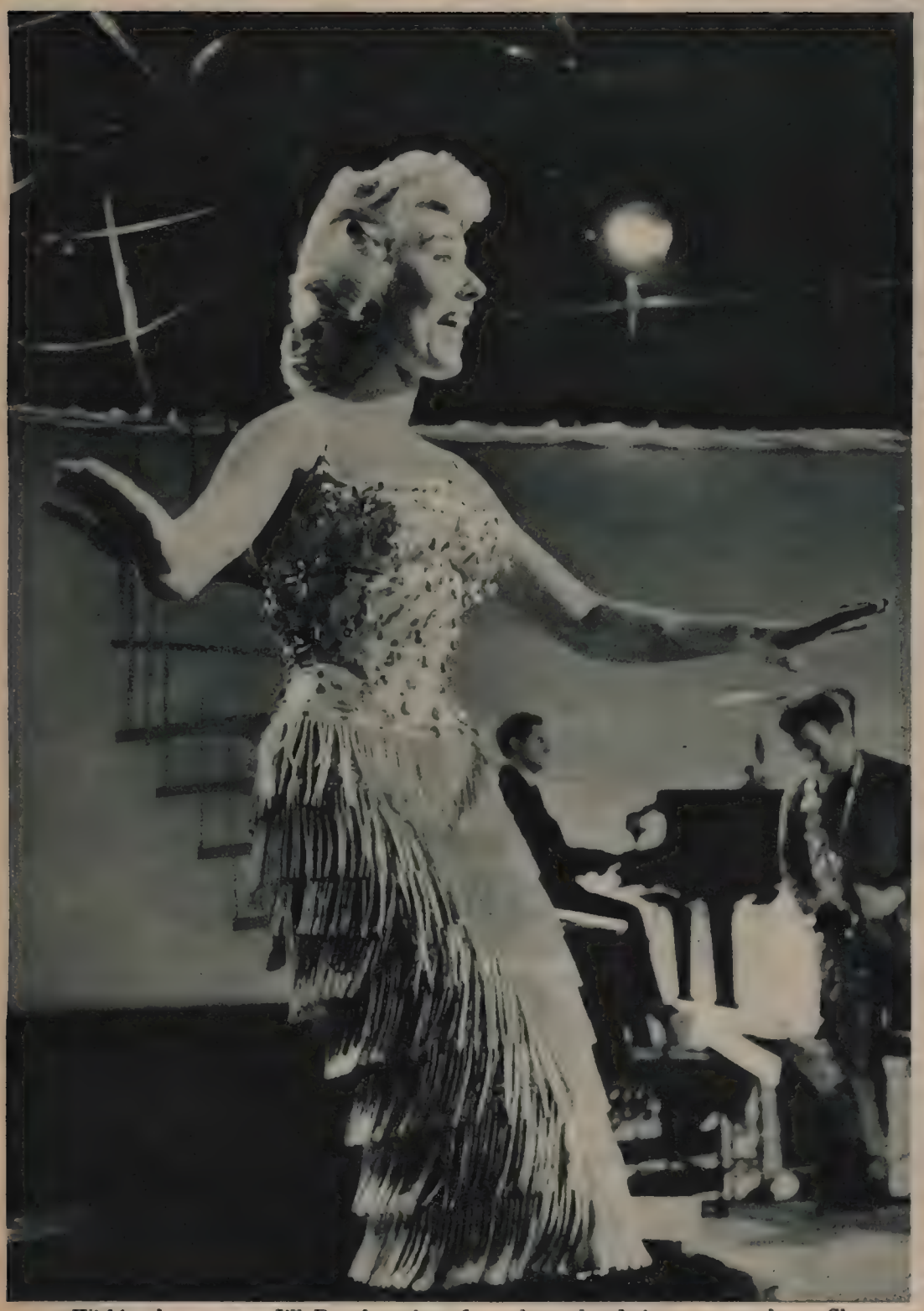
Jill Day goes into battle singing

by DON EVERITT

"I'm a fighter," she says. She makes her rules and sticks to them—even if she gets hurt. Her voice and fiery independence have brought success to a turbulent career

Within three years, Jill Day has risen from dance band singer to stardom. She rejects advice . . . and, if anything goes wrong, "then I have only myself to blame"

IN the middle of a sentimental song, the star of the show, Jill Day, glared furiously past the television camera and stopped singing. She snapped: "I want to see that monitor."

The studio manager, about to move the monitor television set, said that it got in the way of the cameras. Miss Day shouted above the soft music: "I don't care. I want to see where I am in the picture."

From high in the control room at the B.B.C.'s Riverside Studios, the producer of the show spoke to the manager, who wears headphones. "Never mind what she says. The monitor is for the benefit of the studio staff, not the artists."

But, though the producer was right, the manager did mind what Miss Day had said. The monitor stayed put. Miss Day smilingly resumed the song at the inappropriate line, "I'm a little lamb who's lost in the wood."

Jill Day, a twenty-six year old, green-eyed, blonde singer from Brighton who currently claims to earn an average of £400 a week, is no lamb and in the show business jungle is certainly never lost. By her pugnacious drive and self-confidence, plus talent and hard work, she has in three years risen from comparative obscurity as a dance band vocalist to star ranking in the variety theatre and on television.

"Like my father, I am a fighter," she says. "He's always told me, 'If you want anything, you have to fight for it.' That's how I've got where I am."

In perhaps her most spectacular encounter, Miss Day opposed the B.B.C. At the end of 1955 she contracted to sell her television services exclusively to the corporation for three years. Last October 2 she announced that the B.B.C. had not treated her fairly and that two nights later she would appear in the Associated Television programme, *Startime*. The next morning Mr. Justice Pearson granted a B.B.C. application for an injunction restraining Miss Day from making television appearances infringing her contract. She did not appear in *Startime*.

"I argued with Ronnie Waldman that the B.B.C. had given me no better treatment than the non-contract singers. They gave one of them, Yana, a series of forty-five-minute shows. They offered me a fifteen-minute series. I am not bitchy; I like Yana. I just felt that I had a raw deal."

A MONTH later the B.B.C. announced that it would release Miss Day from her contract after she had appeared in a series of six half-hour shows.

"I had to agree to pay half their legal costs, about £100, but the fight had turned out fine for me," she says. "I had won both a worthwhile series and my release."

It was not the first time that Miss Day's belligerence and defiance had involved her in the High Court. In 1951, as Jill Page, she successfully sued Café de Paris bandleader Sidney Simone for assault, alleging that he tweaked her nose, twisted his finger in her ear, kissed her in a taxi cab and slapped her. The jury awarded her a farthing damages. She had to pay the costs of the three-day action. She said afterwards: "One thing, I won't have to put up with over-familiarity again. I can get on with my career." For a long time after the action she received farthings anonymously through the post.

Last December, the High Court ordered Miss Day to reveal her earnings to the bandleader, Geraldo, and to pay him one-eighth of her earnings when they exceeded £50 a week, under the terms of a three-year management contract that she had signed with him in September, 1954.

"The trouble with Jill," says one of her business associates, "is that she does not always weigh up the consequences of her actions." The B.B.C. producer of *The Jill Day Show*, Russell

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He had learned to deal with fire and flood. But Pete knew little about that other enemy—the man with the gun

Island of Birds

by NORAH BURKE

ILLUSTRATED BY WYLES

PETE OLIVER was making his customary morning survey with field-glasses when he saw a huge white bird. It was standing in the reeds near the heronry, and for a moment he thought it was either a very pale common heron among his ordinary ones, or else a spoonbill visiting from the Continent.

Then he saw that it was an egret—a Great White Heron, the rarest bird ever to set foot in the sanctuary. More, there were two of them, and they were in breeding plumage. Down the back, from the shoulders, floated a bridal veil of aigrette plumes, airy as snowflakes.

Pete, who was standing transfixed, suddenly gulped in a lot of air, having forgotten to breathe. Then he changed over quickly to his other, bigger binoculars—the ones that had to be steadied against a tree—and made a rapid and more detailed assessment of the whole situation.

Although he knew every British bird, he had never seen great egrets before, but he recognized them from pictures. For the moment he could not remember whether they nested in trees, as his grey herons did, or on the mud, like flamingoes, but he did remember reading that they might join ordinary herons at nesting time. Other countries had the pleasure of this bird, he knew, but it had certainly never nested in Britain before.

The egrets were magnificent; tall, stately and white as swansdown, with creamy shadows. His binoculars brought him, from half a mile away, every detail of their slender bodies and long black legs, in silent colour-film.

The birds were standing with necks resting backwards between hunched wings, and five-inch dagger bills pointing upwards. On their backs the aigrette plumes came out like spray from a waterfall.

At one time, because women copied rajahs and wore those fairy filaments with diamonds for their own decoration, egrets had been so persecuted every spring that they had been nearly exterminated in all continents; but fashion changed, the species recovered, multiplied and now here were a pair of them, in Britain, clearly preparing to nest.

Pete glanced about quickly for any threat to the birds. Around him in every direction lay the wild swamps and tussocks of this East Anglian estuary, in which his own tidal island rose to low hillocks crowned by pine trees whose tops were thickened by heron nests. It was a wide and sweeping watercolour, mostly sky. In the mauve-blue-grey-fawn landscape, from horizon to horizon and up to the stratosphere, nothing stopped the movement of air and, on this fresh cool-warm April morning, a blue salt wind was bringing from miles away the washing sound of reeds, and the talk of wild duck on mud.

Everywhere were birds; teal, shelduck, waders, harrier. Those that could not be seen could be heard. Pete, who knew each performer, as a conductor hears every note of every instrument in his orchestra, was subconsciously distinguishing all the time the song of various warblers, the different whistles of redshank and sandpiper. Now and then a prehistoric *kronk* from the herons overhead sounded loudest of all.

In this silted-up estuarine island all these birds nested in comparative peace; Nature's dangerous peace, that is, threatened of course by stoats, jays and so on, but at any rate not by man. For man had decreed that this island should be given to wild life. Civilization lapped this shore, but the nation—the crowded land where building and agriculture disputed every acre—had decided, before it was too late, that here the country should remain wild, so that rare birds and disappearing wild flowers should have a chance to live instead of following the Great Auk and the dodo into extinction.

Societies interested in ornithology and the preservation of fauna and flora had achieved this purpose with the backing of the people, and they had put Mr. P. Oliver in charge of the place.

Pete was an active, lean, brown man. He lived in gum boots, feeling soggy land all day beneath his bone-dry feet, and he wore field-glasses all the time, like a necklace. He looked remarkably healthy. He had keen blue eyes and wind-blown hair, and a hundred-per-cent disability pension from the war. . . .

Now he limped off at full speed towards a figure he recognized as Simpson, the landowner whose property bordered this sanctuary. Simpson was standing safely on the boundary of his land, gun under his arm and dog at his feet, looking across at the rare white birds.

Mr. Simpson was a short, square figure in poacher coat, breeches, leggings and boots. There might be a dead mole or hare in his pocket, and he could call up stoats and owls to him, to shoot them. Sixty-five years had done nothing to reduce his activities, but they, together with the frost and the wind, had grizzled him.

He was a first-class shot and he did not approve of herons. The fish they rejected attracted crows, who fed also on pheasant chicks. Besides that, he, like Peter, took a keen interest in wild birds and he had a collection under glass of almost every species, with its eggs, that had ever been seen in Britain. Naturally it did not yet contain a Great White Heron.

Wind was chilling Pete's ears and brushing his hair about on his forehead as he hurried towards Simpson; but he was not in the least out of breath, because all his time was spent walking. Only once a month did he have to stay indoors and write a report for the societies who employed him, and that was the worst task of all.

He arrived within shouting distance. The tide was up, slapping under mud banks that were bored by marine worms and razor shells. Blue water instead of black mud lay between him and Simpson.

When he roved up on to the dyke and glared across at the old man his gaze was returned with unperturbed venom.

"They're Great White Herons," Pete shouted; insultingly, because, of course, Simpson knew just as much about wild birds as he did.

"Egrets."

"Oh."

"This is only about the tenth time they've ever been seen in Britain and I think they're going to nest."

"Indeed."

"What's more," shouted Pete across the cold blue water, "if anything happens to them, I'll have your blood."

SIMPSON did not reply. He belonged to an era when the only way to prove the presence of a rare bird in the district was to shoot it. On his land he grew buckwheat and sunflowers, to keep the pheasants at home. As for other birds, he shot or trapped them when he wanted them, whether they were protected or not. There were traps on both sides of the dyke, but those birds caught on Pete's side were ringed and released in order to reveal the mysteries of migration: in Simpson's traps they had other destinations.

Once the old man had given Pete a brace of pheasants at Christmas, not entirely out of the kindness of his heart, but partly for the pleasure of watching his opponent accept birds that had been shot.

"The fruits of the earth are for man," he had said. "Keep your balance about it, Oliver, won't you?"

Simpson and his large liver-and-white spaniel both snarled at the world. But Pete, too, was sometimes tired and short-tempered, in his case due to pain.

It had been Tobruk for him, the Somme for Simpson. If ever Pete had to think about that time, though, he could not bring it back. His brain refused the memory and slipped away on to other things.

The old man now turned and left. Pete watched him out of sight, then got back to his cottage as fast as he could, to ring up the

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Pete flew into a passion and raged towards the crowd of fire-fighters. "Anybody seen Simpson?" he shouted

In a hall modelled on London's Festival Hall, Mary Green addresses 2,100 girls at morning assembly

An art class at Kidbrooke. "Girls are happy here because they can learn whatever they are best at," says Mary Green

Schoolgirls who teach the world

Mary Green's pupils confound critics of Kidbrooke's revolutionary school. It has everything, plus smiles

by FRANCIS HITCHING

In one of the school's flats girls are taught how to serve a meal. Every week housecraft students entertain teachers to lunch or tea

MISS MARY GREEN, headmistress of Kidbrooke comprehensive school in south-east London, shook hands with her visitor and started to take him on a quarter-mile conducted tour of the buildings. As they went into the domed assembly hall, designed, on the same principle as the Festival Hall, to seat the school's 2,100 girls, she realized that he was one of her more awkward guests.

The visitor, headmaster of a London grammar school, asked abruptly: "How on earth can you hope to keep discipline in a room this size?" Mary Green replied calmly that girls were naturally well-behaved.

A little later, the headmaster noted with disapproval the loudspeakers in every classroom. "Don't the girls resent being boomed at by a disembodied voice?" he asked. On the contrary, she replied, they would rather listen to a routine message than look for it on a notice-board.

As they walked down the brightly coloured corridors, the headmaster announced that he disliked contemporary architecture. Then he asked: "Surely you can't know all the girls in a school this size?"

At that moment two girls passed them in the corridor. Mary Green saw her opportunity. She named the girls, told him where they lived, what subjects they were studying, what hobbies they enjoyed, how old they were and what they hoped to do when they left school.

"He was visibly impressed," she says. His questions became less belligerently phrased, and at the end of the tour he confided: "This experiment of yours may work."

Since Kidbrooke opened amid violent controversy in September, 1954, to become Britain's largest secondary school, Mary Green's efforts to build a new style of free education have been fiercely examined by some 20,000 visitors from all parts of the world.

With a salary of a little more than £2,000 a year, Mary Green is the highest-paid headmistress of a state school in England and Wales. A tall, fair-haired woman in her forties, she works confidently and smoothly at the twin jobs of organizing the £2 million school and explaining its purpose to parents and educationists. "We are on trial before the world," she says.

Kidbrooke is Britain's first attempt to combine grammar, secondary modern and technical education under one roof. Each year the school takes 450 eleven-year-olds of all standards of ability from the nearby suburbs of Greenwich, Woolwich and Lewisham. The results of their eleven-plus tests are used only to indicate in which of fifteen forms they should be placed.

For the first three years, all study the same subjects: English, history, geography, French or Spanish, mathematics, science, art, craft, scripture, music, housecraft, needlework and P.T. Then, when they have shown which subjects suit them best, they are channelled into taking academic subjects for their General Certificate of Education or into one of the two-year practical courses in shorthand and typing, tailoring, dressmaking, millinery, and catering, or into combination of the two streams.

Mary Green has had to make this system work at Kidbrooke while the theory of comprehensive schools has been intensely criticized. Three years ago, four out of five grammar school teachers opposed them for being too large, impersonal and unwieldy, however good their teaching facilities. An ex-president of the

To equip Kidbrooke cost £55,000. As well as potter's wheels there are typewriters, projectors, radio sets and a greenhouse

Mary Green instructs a pupil. School messages may be received on the loud-speaker at the side of the blackboard

London Schoolmasters' Association said: "The headmistress would need to be a superwoman to know intimately even the teaching staff." A Conservative M.P. prophesied a "dismal levelling of standards . . . girls of exceptional ability are bound to be neglected." The Ministry of Education still regards them as experimental, although there are now thirty-three comprehensive schools in England and Wales, with another fifteen under construction.

Mary Green believes that they are the answer to Britain's free secondary education. Her persuasive salesmanship has gained many supporters from the visitors she has shown round. Prince Saud Abdul Ben Aziz of Saudi Arabia arrived with a retinue of officials, interpreters, Ministry of Education representatives, reporters and photographers. He was delighted by the attitude of the children. In one classroom he posed for photographers while sitting at a desk which a girl had offered him to "try for size."

Afterwards, he complimented the headmistress on the girls' behaviour. "They are so friendly and natural," he said.

Says Mary Green: "The credit wasn't mine at all. The girls are so used to strangers that they weren't in the least overawed by a prince."

Although she welcomes opportunities to show Kidbrooke to the public, she has had to ask London County Council to keep down official visits to one a week. "We were getting more like a National Trust property than a school."

Before Kidbrooke opened, she made a point of showing each parent and child round the building. Then the L.C.C. issued a public invitation to anybody who wanted to see the school. More than 14,000 accepted. Mary Green worked nightly talking to groups of 250.

A FLAIR for bringing friendly touches into the school's activities has gone a long way towards answering those who said that Kidbrooke would have a cold and impersonal atmosphere. Every week girls taking housecraft give luncheon or tea-parties for the mistresses; they are held in one of the school's flats. "We treat the girls as though they had invited us to their own homes," says Mary Green.

Many teachers have had clothes made by the girls, paying into school funds the cost of the materials. "Being fitted for a dress established a new and usually amicable relationship with the girls," says Mary Green, who has eight hats, a suit, three woollen dresses, an evening dress, a cocktail dress and three summer frocks, all made in the school workrooms. Once, when she picked a material and pattern for a new dress, the girl making it told her decisively: "It wouldn't suit you." The girl won the

Housecraft is one of the subjects that all girls take for three years. Later they may choose to do academic or practical studies

ensuing argument, and ultimately made a dress which Mary Green admits is one of her favourites. Twice, when members of the staff were getting married, girls have co-operated to make a wedding cake, and dresses for bride and bridesmaids.

"None of this would be possible without the huge range of equipment Kidbrooke offers," says Mary Green. "My experience has been that girls are happy here because they can learn whatever they are best at."

The school's initial equipment cost £55,000. Each classroom has a radio, the library has ten thousand books, housecraft flats have beds and baths, kitchens have electric, gas and solid fuel cookers, needlework rooms have eight kinds of sewing machines with glass-fronted showcases and mirrored fitting rooms, art rooms have easels, potter's wheels and kilns. There are fifty-six typewriters, a dictating machine, thirteen pianos, thirteen projectors, five gymnasia, sixteen acres of playing fields, and a greenhouse.

"About the only thing we don't have is a television set," says Mary Green. But one is on the way.

Kidbrooke's educational advantages are already beginning to prove themselves. Girls who develop late or fall behind the rest of their form can be moved painlessly from class to class until they find a level which suits them. One girl who had been abroad for most of her childhood and did badly in the eleven-plus test was moved in two stages from the third-lowest to the third-highest form.

"If she had been at a secondary modern school she might have found it extremely difficult to change from practical to academic education," says Mary Green.

She has also found that girls are anxious to stay on after the minimum school leaving age to take advantage of Kidbrooke's commercial, technical and G.C.E. courses.

At present there are 227 girls over fifteen. Only a few were graded "grammar" in their eleven-plus tests. Many of the rest would have gone to schools where there are few opportunities for advanced education.

Kidbrooke's attendance record is slightly higher than the London average. Discipline, says Mary Green, is as good as at the Bristol grammar school where she was headmistress. Though it is not compulsory, nearly all the girls wear uniform, many of them working in the holidays to be able to buy it. "If there has been any change of standards through bunching two thousand girls together, they have gone up instead of down."

Mary Green was born in Wellingborough in 1913, the daughter of an infants' school headmistress. She gained a first-class honours degree in French at Westfield College, London University. She taught for five years at Clapham High School, moved to William Hulme's Grammar School, Manchester, during the war, and was made headmistress of Colston's Girls' School, Bristol, in 1946.

Appointed to her present job in 1954, she had nine months to create a single comprehensive school out of one central, one secondary modern and two secondary technical schools. To do it in the time, she worked twelve hours a day in a tiny office in Greenwich, and held meetings for her staff of one hundred in teachers' homes all over South London.

She has resisted all attempts by the girls to make her more remote than necessary. During the first term she asked them to suggest names for titles of the eight school houses (now called after the Queen's beasts).

One girl thought it would be a good idea to use the names of saints, starting with Saint Mary and Saint Agnes. Miss Mary Green, headmistress, and Miss Agnes McMaster, who was then deputy head, quietly decided that they weren't quite ready for beatification. THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

Dari-Rich

MILK

I ate the truffle

I'm a soft-hearted creature.
I like chocolates that just melt away.
All smoothness and gorgeous flavour!
Coffee and strawberry creams,
montelimart, Turkish Delight.

I ate the nut log

I'm a hard man to please. I like a
centre you can get your teeth into.
Caramels, cracknels, all the crunchy kinds.
Plenty to chew your way
through in a box of Dari-Rich.

I ate the whole top layer

(While the others were being so choosy!) I don't know how they make that Caley rich milk chocolate, but I know why they call it Dari-Rich.
Really makes you think of fresh creamy milk.
Makes you think? Not likely. Makes you eat!

¼ lb 1/4 ½ lb 2/6 1 lb 5/-

Enjoy the dairy richness in Caley Dari-Rich

How much will Easter cost you?

by JOHN ENNIS

Year by year the bill gets bigger for Britain's holiday spree. It adds up to millions for eggs and buns alone

Easter is expected to boost shop takings this month by £20 million—eight shillings a head

EACH year people in Britain spend more at Easter. Statisticians predict that of £600 million worth of goods that will be sold in shops during April this year, £20 million—an average of eight shillings for every man, woman and child—will be the result of Easter falling in this month.

Last year Easter fell between March 30 (Good Friday) and April 2. In the week ending April 4 the banknotes in circulation totalled £64 million more than the figure for the last week in February, when the banks began to stock up for the Easter demand.

During the last two weeks in March withdrawals from the Post Office Savings Bank exceeded deposits by £2,492,000. By comparison, in many weeks of the year deposits top withdrawals by a million pounds. In the three weeks before Easter 1956, the National Savings Movement recorded net withdrawals of £8,500,000.

The average of eight shillings per head spent in shops went largely on food, drink, clothing and jewellery. The food, in addition to that used in sandwiches for picnics, included uncomputed millions of hot cross buns and Easter eggs. A bakery trade expert guessed that one hundred million hot cross buns were made and eaten. Chocolate manufacturers keep their egg production figures a closely guarded secret; one of the six leading manufacturers, however, is reputed to have made a million eggs last Easter.

Chocolate in any form sells well at Easter, and supplies are distributed to shops in gradually increasing quantities during the months preceding it. Nevertheless, between March 18 and April 14 last year the manufacturers dispatched 21,820 tons for the home market valued at £10,495,400 compared with 16,830 tons (value £8,112,060) in the similar period over August Bank Holiday.

Clothing sales were partly, and jewellery sales almost entirely, due to the large number of weddings in March, though the mundane consideration of income tax relief and not the romance of marriage at Easter was the reason for the popularity of this month among brides and grooms.

The latest year for which a monthly analysis has been made of the number of weddings in England and Wales is 1954. In that year 57,651 couples were married in March, 28,907 in April and 14,519 in May.

Transport takes a good slice of Easter spending money. British Railways' receipts for the four weeks ending April 22, 1956 (the period covering Easter) were up £1,556,000 on the £8,073,000 spent on rail travel in the previous four weeks. Over Easter, 2,804 additional trains ran on the main lines. The number of Easter travellers in 1956 is not on record, but in 1955 a total of 480,000 passengers left London termini in 1,401 long-distance trains on the three peak days.

Easter air travel last year broke all records. Fifty-two per cent more people than in the previous year flew to the Channel Islands, which are becoming the most popular honeymoon resort. Twenty-six per cent more flew on British European Airways' internal routes, ten per cent more on the Paris route and twenty-two per cent more on other international routes.

By the night of Good Friday, 12,900 holiday-makers had flown by B.E.A. from London to spend Easter abroad, paying fares ranging from ten guineas for a night excursion to Paris to £35 15s. for the return flight to Nice. B.E.A. laid on extra flights, fifty-six of them to the Channel Isands alone.

ROAD travel was affected by the weather which, except in the west, was dull and cold until the sun broke through on Easter Monday. Automobile Association checks on main roads out of London revealed that between 10,000 and 15,000 cars an hour were taking people away from the city until midday on Easter Monday. The Monday sun caused motorists to delay their return and by 6.30 p.m. cars were returning to London at the rate of 48,000 an hour.

In the five days from Thursday, March 29, to Easter Monday, seventy-one people were killed and 3,615 injured in road accidents.

Spending was heavily concentrated in popular seaside towns. Blackpool welcomed 344,000 Easter visitors who spent £17,000 on tram and bus rides, £805 on 32,200 deck chair lettings and £890 on golf, tennis, boating and putting facilities provided by the corporation.

Laurie Jones, an official of Southend-on-Sea Corporation, says visitors spent anything between ten shillings and £6 each on a day in the town last Easter.

A Londoner, he suggests, can have a good day at Southend for thirty shillings spent in this way: Day trip ticket from London, 6s. 6d.; deck chair (for three hours), 6d.; admission to the pier, 1s.; lunch, 3s. 6d.; three fairground rides, 5s.; high tea (salad or crab), 2s. 6d.; one large ice cream, 6d.

This leaves 10s. 6d. to be spent on a choice of a boat trip (2s. 6d.), a coach trip (5s.), a pleasure flight (10s.), music on the pier (1s.), or visits to the aquarium (1s. 6d.), the children's theatre (1s.), or the art gallery (free).

Inland pleasure resorts, too, collect their share of Easter pocket money. London zoo had 100,158 visitors who paid entrance money of 3s. and 1s. 6d. for children during the four days of Easter last year. Belle Vue zoological and pleasure gardens, Manchester, attract 100,000 people on a fine Easter Monday and during an average Easter sell 250,000 cups of tea, 192,000 sausage rolls and 64,000 meat pies.

Even those who stay at home spend extra money at Easter. Football matches in addition to the usual Saturday game are provided by most clubs, and fans paid £69,250 entrance money for Good Friday League games and £83,625 for those held on Easter Monday in 1956.

Perhaps most is gained for least cost by walkers and cyclists. Youth hostels reported more than 10,000 beds filled each night over the 1956 Easter holiday. For 7s. 6d. (6s. 3d. if under sixteen) a hosteller can have a three-course supper, bed and breakfast.

The country as a whole cheerfully bears a loss of production at Easter. About 150 million man-hours were lost last Easter in manufacturing industries. Because miners made greater efforts to earn more for the holiday in the weeks preceding Easter, coal production fell very little. In the four weeks from March 12 to April 7, 1956, average weekly coal production was 4,150,000 tons compared with the weekly average for 1956 of 4,270,000 tons. THE END

LAND OF SINGING DEATH · 3

I get lost in 'debil debil' country

by SYD KYLE-LITTLE

Alone and injured, without food or water, I crawled across this evil desert of stone. Then I could move no farther . . .

An aborigine at a water-hole in the rock desert of Arnhem Land. Kyle-Little could not find water during his perilous trek

WITH my aborigine patrol boys, I left the camp of Mahrdei the witchdoctor and headed for the rock escarpment —an unexplored sandstone desert which the aborigines called "debil debil" land or the "stone country." I was determined to visit that region to prove to Mahrdei that I was as strong as he was.

He hated me as an intruding white man in the aborigines' country—but it was my job, as an officer of the government's Native Affairs Branch, to look after the welfare of the aborigines in the vast Arnhem Land reserve of Northern Australia. My immediate task was to catch some suspected native murderers. I had found them once, but they had escaped very near the stone country. Mahrdei warned me that if I entered that region I would not return alive, as I did not have his great powers. I intended to prove him wrong.

Two days later we pushed on towards the source of the Liverpool River. The dry course cut deeply into the sandstone, and sometimes the bottom of the river was a couple of hundred feet down. It was rough and hard going.

That night about thirty Delyang people, who had seen us moving during the day, came into our camp. They were timid but quite friendly. Through Oondabund, my Number One boy, I queried them about the escarpment.

They repeated Mahrdei's warning that it was "debil debil" country. But they insisted that it was inhabited by a small tribe that lived and moved along the sandstone ridges. They were "stone" people, they said, and lived in holes like lizards. If I had needed any extra inducement to take me into the escarpment, this was it. But now some of my boys were not anxious to go any farther.

Jiminmulla, who had become a permanent attachment to the group, having left his friends at Mahrdei's camp, was eager. He was the brother of the man whose murder had brought me into this country. Oondabund determined to go anywhere I went.

Under their influence, most of the other boys overcame their fears and agreed to come. But I decided to leave Narlebar, Oondabund's brother, behind in charge of my swag, the shotgun, the medical kit, rations and tobacco. At the last moment two other boys asked to be excused and stayed with him.

The Delyang people were horrified when they heard of my plans, and all but one cleared out on the evening before our departure.

That we had the services of the one Delyang man seemed especially fortunate, however. He said he knew of a rock water-hole a day's march inside the escarpment. Water was likely to prove our principal worry.

At four o'clock the next morning, carrying only my rifle, a small army pack containing my diary, a pencil, a compass, a bare map and a water-bottle, and accompanied by six boys, including Jiminmulla and Oondabund, I began to scale the escarpment, up a long saddle no more than three hundred feet above the base camp. It needed a full hour's climbing to reach the top, and my hands were soon bleeding and my trousers and shirt ripped and torn.

Centuries of erosion had cut the sandstone into a maze of twisting ravines. For every fifty yards that we advanced towards the south we travelled three hundred yards along all other points of the compass. We climbed down for hundreds of feet, then up again.

By ten o'clock the rocks had warmed up in the sun and the heat became unbearable. The ground itself burned through my boots, and the bootless boys, whose feet had stood up to the wear and tear of thousands of miles in the northern

Oondabund, the patrol boy who twice saved Kyle-Little's life, is now married. With his wife and child, he lives in the bush

plains now complained bitterly. We saw no sign of life of any kind; in the gorges was only dry spinifex.

By noon the sun had even dried up the boys' complaints. It hurt to talk.

We managed to conserve our water. The sun was down when I weakened. I felt that I could go no farther without a drink. I drank heavily from my bottle. Even Oondabund, whose stamina and strength were a constant source of surprise to me, threw his head back and gulped down the distastefully hot, but so much needed, water in his bottle.

Just before dusk we descended into a long gully. The Delyang boy insisted that we would strike water within two hours.

Night came abruptly in the gully, shutting off the day like a snuffed candle. The air was oppressive and the rocks and boulders that strewed our path seemed insurmountable. We found no water.

By eleven o'clock I could no longer stand the lifeless air of the gorge. I decided to make for another high point in the escarpment, and, after an hour's exhausting climbing, we reached the fresh air.

OUR situation began to look desperate. We had been travelling into the escarpment for nineteen hours. In all that period we had had nothing to eat. Our pooled rations consisted only of one tin of bully beef, which I had been carrying in my pocket. I had enough water left in my bottle for only one last swig; some of the boys had already drained their bottles to the last drop.

It was a question of going on in the now non-existent hope of finding the water the Delyang boy had talked of, or of turning back immediately to make as much distance as we could before the next day's sun caught us, with consequences that I did not care to contemplate.

I put it to the boys. Their decision was unanimous. Even the Delyang boy had no wish to go farther on the quest.

We set off at midnight. We made less than a quarter of a mile in the first hour. Time and again we lost the track and wasted endless minutes trying to find it again. At two o'clock, exhausted and frustrated, we stopped for a rest.

While we lay there among the rocks the moon went down. We could see little in the darkness: the last hope of finding our tracks had gone.

In desperation I took a compass bearing and, heading due north, tried to travel in a straight line. We made some progress, though how much I shall never know. We plunged down into gullies and up the far sides. Boys slipped and fell and lost their spears, and there were interminable halts and delays. We stumbled and groped and tripped. I stepped clean over the edge of one steep drop and came to rest in a nest of thorny bushes, with my clothing ripped. I struck my kneecap on the way down and it became stiff and sore.

Dawn found us together in a small group on a great sandstone column. We spoke none of the thoughts that were with us all, but descended again, and in the shade of some overhanging rocks slumped in utter despair.

When we set off again, my tongue was starting to swell. My lips cracked. I had no moisture in my mouth. I couldn't swallow. I choked as I breathed, and the rocks moved as I stepped, and over and over again I fell on my knees among them. The soles of my boots had worn almost through. My feet burned with every step.

I stumbled and fainted. When I came to, Oondabund was beside me. He dragged me into the shade. Later, the boys crawled up. They were all as badly off, or worse, than I.

More by sign language than anything else, I indicated to Oondabund that it was now a case of each man for himself.

"More better you come, Boss," he answered. "You no more come you bin finish."

Oondabund goaded most of the others into moving on. He told them that if they stayed they would die.

I wanted desperately to give a lead and, rested, I forced myself to my feet. One of the boys had already moved on ahead. Another followed me, but the Delyang boy could not move and lay in the shade. One, in rather better shape than most of the rest, stayed with him.

My effort to keep going was shortlived. I missed my footing at the top of a steep bank and rolled helplessly for twenty feet down the rock-covered slope. I could go no farther.

My next recollection was of Oondabund leaning over me, slapping my face. He seized me by the head and lifted me up.

Between Oondabund's dragging and my own desperate efforts to crawl, I reached the shade of a deep crevice in the face of the sandstone, a sort of pipe running up through the rock. I could see clear sky above me, but was mercifully out of the sun.

Oondabund stayed with me for some minutes. I think he wanted to reassure himself that I was not about to die. He dragged my pack across to me, put the rifle on top of it and removed my water bottle from my belt.

I was fully conscious now. I could neither move nor speak; but I understood. And I was sure the end was near and that I would never see Oondabund again.

I watched him walk down the gully. He did not turn, or even look back, and a great loneliness descended on me. I did not want to die.

I fell into a light sleep. When I awoke I felt a little stronger, though my craving for water was unbearable. My tongue was as big as a balloon. It was swollen and rough and sore. When I touched it, it was dry and thick like a carpet. To test myself I spoke a few words, but no intelligible sound issued.

Evening came to the escarpment and I still lived. Hope drove me to my feet. I got my rifle and laboriously slung it over my back. I picked up my pack and made my way in the direction that I believed to be north.

I crawled for want of strength to move in any other way. I did not crawl far. I could not move with my rifle and pack and I left them both, struggling out of the straps and crawling on. And then, in sudden panic, I went back for them and found them and stayed where I was, cut and bleeding and dying.

My last effort was to get myself under a rock. I remember that and nothing more. . . .

MY first recollection, hours later, was of water trickling over my lips. I groaned and opened my eyes.

And there was Oondabund. He had soaked a piece of my shirt in water and was gently squeezing it into my mouth. I struggled to swallow, but my swollen tongue blocked the way. I tried to seize the bottle from Oondabund, but he wouldn't give it to me.

"This must last, Boss," he said.

He fed me the water, drop by drop, during the afternoon. He had brought with him an iguana and this he broke into little pieces and, lying in the shade under the rocks, we ate it raw. I vomited afterwards.

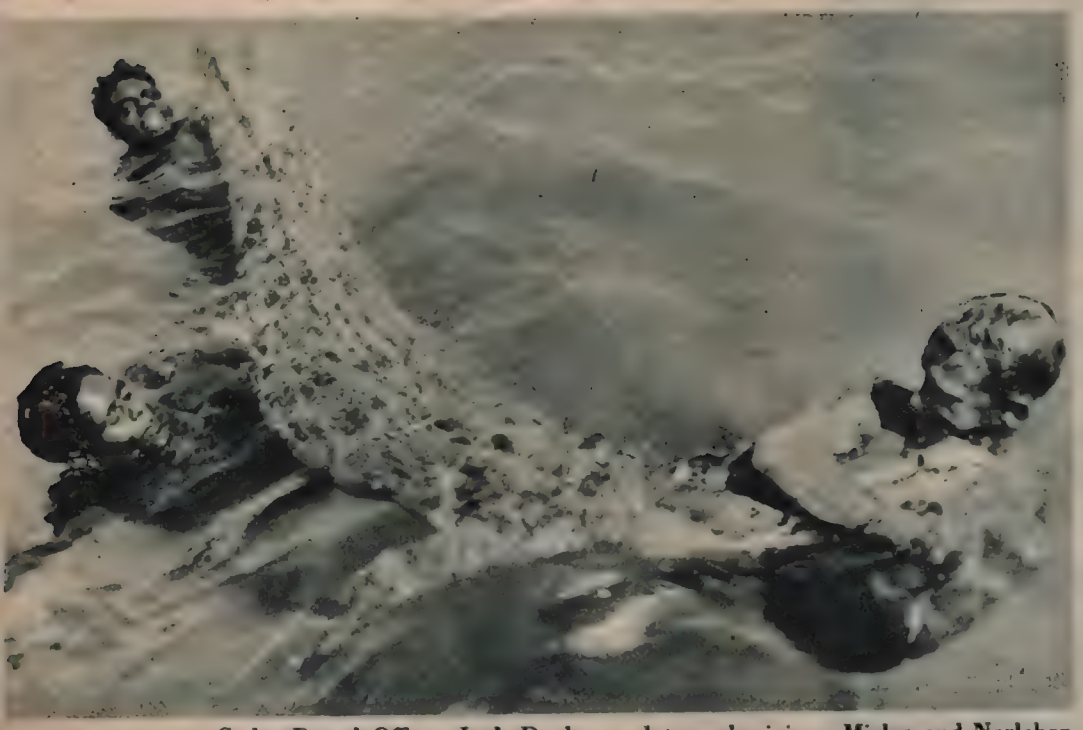
Oondabund told me how he had made his way out of the escarpment and had found the water-hole where we had left Narlebar with the stores. When he heard the news, Narlebar himself had started into the escarpment with water-bottles to look for the other boys, while his two offsiders, who had refused to make the trip and had even less stomach for it now, lit fires along the plain beyond the escarpment.

Oondabund said that if we didn't get out during the night we would never get out. His feet were swollen to enormous size and badly cut. Mine hurt so much and my shoes were so badly worn that I thought of taking them off and hobbling along barefooted. But that way, I knew, was madness.

We moved at nightfall. All night long Oondabund guided and led and helped me. A dozen times or more I pleaded with him to go on alone. Each time he refused. Only by making my mind a blank and relying entirely on Oondabund did I get through. I remember little of the night, other than that we reached the edge of the escarpment before dawn. An hour later we were back at the water-hole, a crystal-clear pool, about eight feet deep at one end and shallow towards the other. I wanted to drink the pool dry.

I stepped into it and drank. One moment I was dying from thirst, the next I had slipped and lost my footing and was in danger of drowning. Oondabund dragged me into shallow water and there I lay, vomiting and choking.

Oondabund lit a fire and sent up smoke which



Cadet Patrol Officer Jack Doolan and two aborigines, Micky and Narlebar, bring in a crocodile which Kyle-Little had shot in the Liverpool River

Natives cure crocodile skin at the store set up by Kyle-Little at Muningreda. Reptile skins were traded for goods from Darwin

was answered by smoke from a fire about eight miles to the west. Three of the boys, accompanied by Narlebar, turned up in the evening. A few days later we made our way back to Mahrdei's camp.

Mahrdei greeted us in astonishment. He had already learned of the failure of the trip into the escarpment from the Delyang people who had picked up one of the missing boys. The boy had told the Delyang people how he had stayed with their tribesman and watched him until he died of thirst and exhaustion and had then struggled on himself, convinced that all the rest of us had perished.

"You savvy this debil-debil country now?" Mahrdei asked through Oondabund.

I had to confess that I did not regard it with any enthusiasm.

The rains had transformed Mahrdei's camp area. The billabongs were now part of the Liverpool River, which, in several streams, swept lustily to the sea. Mahrdei and his people were preparing to leave for a small plateau in the stringy-bark forests closer to the coast

I stayed to rest for another day and night. Of my original group of boys, only Oondabund and Narlebar remained. Jiminmulla was still with me, intent on catching up with Nundul and Narminnierobu, the suspected murderers. I hired five new boys, and with my three regulars set off once again.

THOUGH the "dry" season had broken inland, near the coast the rains had not yet begun. Jiminmulla was now our guide, and our destination the scene of the murder. On Saturday, December 21, 1946, we descended from the plateau across which we had been travelling into dry salt flats, with occasional salt water swamps.

Jiminmulla became very excited when he cut the tracks of two men. He swore that these were Nundul's and Narminnierobu's and that we were about two days' travel behind them.

We camped for the night beside a small and shallow billabong covered with water lilies. It had been a hot day's march and we wasted no time about dropping our packs and making a dash for the water. Then one of the boys was grabbed by a seven-foot crocodile. The brute came out of the water to take him by the arm and the boy went down. Narlebar managed to grab him by the legs. I, in turn, got Narlebar by the waist.

While this awful tug of war went on in the water, with the screaming boy in the middle, Oondabund and Jiminmulla splashed for the bank and their spears and woomeras. They threw simultaneously. One spear hit the crocodile in the middle of the body. The other struck near the hindquarters, where it embedded itself deeply.

With a furious lashing of the tail the crocodile released the boy's arm, but not before he had almost stripped it of its flesh.

The wounded boy, Narlebar and I fell back into the water and quickly made for the bank, where I dressed the horrifying wound.

The following day I walked into a big spider's web and was bitten on the right elbow. The bite hurt furiously, and Oondabund, having inspected the remains of the spider after I had squashed it on the ground, said it was "properly a cheeky fellow, all the same snake."

The pain of the poison circulating in my arm was unbearable. I made a small incision with one of the scalpels and squeezed out an astonishing quantity of green fluid.

During the night I could feel my arm swelling. I woke the following morning with a slight temperature. My arm was in a fearful state and I had a huge lump in the glands under the armpit. There was nothing I would have chosen less cheerfully than the dry, hot march. But I had no alternative. We couldn't remain in this arid spot. Also, by electing to march at night, I had lost the tracks of the two men ahead of us, but it seemed that they must be heading for a spot called Oenpelli.

So, like a pair of lame dogs, the boy whose arm had been torn by the crocodile and I laboured on together.

By 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve, 1946, we were camped by a good clear billabong.

I was too sick to move on Christmas Day. All the rations were exhausted and food for the remaining day's march was a problem. The boys solved it by killing an eighteen-foot rock python and baking it on the ashes. I was in no mood to eat snake, but it was better than nothing. And on this meal we set out at dawn on Boxing Day on the last stage of the journey to Oenpelli.

Once again we had picked up the tracks of the men ahead of us and as we approached the rolling plains that surround the Oenpelli mission I sent Oondabund and Narlebar on ahead with two boys to round them up. By the time I arrived, Oondabund had not only found and gathered in Nundul and Narminnierobu, but brought them out to meet me.

Thus, with the two men in charge, we descended on the lovely old mission homestead.

We stayed there until a boat picked us up along the East Alligator River and took us to Darwin, where I delivered my two prisoners.

Two months later they made a dramatic bid for liberty from Fanny Bay Jail. The two men ran naked from the jail showers, vaulted a fence and made for the bush.

At the moment of their escape I happened to drive up to the jail in a truck, with Oondabund. We chased the two boys on foot. I brought Nundul down with a flying tackle. Oondabund dealt similarly with Narminnierobu.

I couldn't resist boasting to the miserable pair as I took them back.

"I told you, Nundul," I said. "You run—I catch."

Their trial began in the Supreme Court at Alice Springs on March 24. The case was dismissed.

I was not sorry. If I hadn't intervened, on instruction, the matter would have been settled in Arnhem Land according to tribal law.

MORE than two years passed before my ideas on Arnhem Land began to attract official attention. Arnhem Land, an area of 28,000 square miles, had never been effectively policed or patrolled. And there was a regrettable drift of the natives from the reserve to Darwin.

My suggestion was that a patrol officer and a cadet officer be based in the Liverpool River area and should open a small trading store to stop this drift from the reserve. If the natives could get basic rations and other goods in exchange for crocodile and snake skins, I thought that they would have no wish to leave their own country.

Shortly after Easter, 1949, I was sent to "investigate the possibilities of encouraging the inhabitants of the area to hunt crocodiles and barter the skins for goods."

I began to prepare for the patrol.

The first need was a boat, and I found a twenty-one foot auxiliary cutter, the Amity, every bit of thirty years old. She was rotten and dirty—but a boat, nevertheless, and Oondabund and I sailed her back to Darwin with excitement in our hearts. We beached her at Doctor's Gully, just outside Darwin, and there Oondabund, Jack Doolan, a cadet who had just joined the Native Affairs Branch, and I began to give her a complete refit.

A small manhole in the deck led to a tiny two-berth cabin. To the rear of this was the kerosene engine, reached by crawling on hands and knees from the cabin. The height of the cabin was no more than four feet, so that we

had room to sit up and no more. In one corner of the engine-room there was space for a Primus stove and close to this, using the engine as a support, we built a small table.

We worked for fifteen hours a day on the job. After a few days I knew that I had found an admirable partner for the months ahead. Doolan shared all my enthusiasm for the trading post.

On June 2, 1949, we sailed from Darwin loaded to the gunwales and with scarcely room to move. In addition to Doolan and Oondabund, I again had Narlebar with me, plus a third native.

We made for the mouth of the Liverpool River and there I decided to set up our camp and store at a spot called Muningreda. By the end of the second day we were ready to start operations.

I explained to innumerable natives that we proposed to kill crocodiles and snakes and to cure and salt the hides and skins which we would then send off to Darwin in exchange for trade goods—blankets, tomahawks, sugar, tea and tobacco. If they wanted to join in the trade they could start right away.

While they were quietly assimilating the surprising knowledge that I had come to open up a trading post, I decided to make a quick survey of the coastal region between Junction Bay and the Blyth River, travelling up all the rivers on this section of the coast, contacting the various tribal groups with the idea of making an estimate of the quantity and type of products the natives could produce from local resources.

In the afternoon of June 27 we dropped anchor in the upper reaches of the Blyth River. Doolan and I brewed a billy of tea on the Primus stove and, having stripped off all our clothing, climbed into our bunks early. . . .

My first recollection was of great shock. I found myself hurled from the bunk. Doolan landed on top of me and a wall of water forced open the engine-room door and overwhelmed us. I had time only to take one deep breath before the pea-soup waters of the Blyth enveloped me.

I felt the open hatch leading to the engine-room and groped my way through.

I got into the cockpit and out over the edge of the boat. I had no idea what had happened. All I knew was that I was well under water and all my efforts and thoughts were directed towards trying to get to the surface.

Doolan surfaced almost at the same moment and I heard him calling: "Syd, Syd!"

I swam towards the voice and with horror struck one of the dead crocodiles that had been lying on deck.

I shouted "crocodile" and went for the bank, with Doolan after me. Narlebar, on the bank, had run into the water with the torch and was standing waist high with the torch above his head and a hand outstretched to help us.

Breathing hard and completely nonplussed by our experiences, Doolan and I climbed to the top of the bank. Of the Amity there was no sign.

Sitting there on the bank beside the fires, slapping at mosquitoes and stark naked, we tried to work out what had happened.

I THOUGHT that we'd probably been holed by a big tree going out on the fast-flowing tide. Fearful difficulties lay ahead of us in getting back to Muningreda. By boat, if we'd had one, the journey would have been the best part of 150 miles. Overland, we were all of fifty miles away.

Drinking water was the immediate problem. Narlebar had reported that there was no fresh water in the area.

We began to hunt for the Amity opposite where Narlebar had had his night fires. Narlebar saw it first. He shouted and jumped to his feet, pointing some thirty yards up river where just a couple of inches of the Amity's mast, moving slowly downstream with the tide, had begun to show. We left one of the boys sitting in the muddy branches of a submerged tree to act as lookout for crocodiles and sharks while the rest of us dived down to the Amity.

Doolan reached the mast first and dived down beside it. Narlebar and I went down together. My rifle and cartridge belt, which I had placed on a shelf in the engine-room, were my first objective. I got through the cockpit to the engine-room and actually found the shelf where I had put the rifle. Of course, the rifle and belt were no longer there.

BITTERLY disappointed and seized with panic that I wouldn't be able to find my way out of the engine-room quickly enough, I groped for the hatch. But I had miscalculated the direction and had to go back to the engine and get my bearings all over again. I clawed back, trying to control my fear and my thumping heart and this time I missed the engine. I clawed desperately across the floor and found not the engine but the rifle and belt. I grabbed the rifle with joy. At the same moment I kicked against the engine. I went for the hatch again and out into the cockpit. It was lighter here. I could almost see. I kicked desperately with my legs and went up, clutching the rifle and belt.

Doolan had already been to the surface with a coil of rope which he had tied to the top of the Amity's mast; he now swam over to us with the other end of the rope and a couple of tins of bully beef. Narlebar had found an extra billy-can and two blankets which he brought over to the tree. We sent the third native, a Barawa, to look for water.

Doolan and I talked over the situation. We decided to set off overland for Muningreda as soon as the boy returned with the water. We had no spare clothes there, but rations were plentiful, and we would be able to make nargas out of sugar bags.

The Barawa boy came back with a billy-can of stinking swamp water. But he also brought with him forty other aborigines. The forty additional hands, twenty of them adult and male, changed our ideas about discontinuing the salvage operations in the Amity. The tide had continued to fall and now several feet of the mast were showing.

Posting *lubras* along the river's edge to warn of sharks or crocodiles, the natives entered the water together, splashing and shouting. They did an excellent job. They brought up an astonishing miscellany: picks, shovels, carpenter's tools, plates, knives, forks, pannikins and coils of rope.

While this operation was going on I began to wonder whether we might not make an attempt to save the Amity herself. If we could get the boat near the bank, I thought, we might be able to rig a block and tackle on a tree.

With a small party to take up the slack on the aft anchor we got the Amity's bow to within fifteen feet of the bank.

The tide was now coming in and I knew we had little time left. Narlebar went down into the Amity again and salvaged a block and tackle which we rigged on an overhanging tree and then attached to the boat.

Foot by foot the Amity came off the bottom. . . .

Everything, of course, was covered with mud, but what mattered was that the Amity was afloat—and intact. Not a single plank had been damaged!

The only possible explanation was that we had anchored at high tide directly above a submerged tree. Since the tide dropped twenty feet or more, we had been deposited as it went out on the trunk of the tree and there had balanced while the water flowed away beneath us. Here, we must have rested until one of us, stirring in sleep, had destroyed the precarious balance and sent us plummeting, stern first, into the river. . . .

After a journey lasting four days, we reached the mouth of the Blyth River, towing the Amity with the two dug-out canoes. We beached her on a fine, white stretch of sand and there, during the next week, stripped her from bow to stern. Then at last we got her to a mission workshop and put her in order again.

Doolan got orders to return to Darwin, and I expected to be lonely. I found to my astonishment that the weeks flew by. I entered fully into the life of the aborigines. By this time they had built a big corroboree ground behind the trading post and at night, when darkness brought to an end the work of the day, I used to go down and watch and sometimes even join in the dances.

It was at this time, on an inland journey, that I found Mahrdei the witchdoctor again. And my whole attitude towards the aborigines was put to its severest test by the most savage tribal revenge I was to see.

NEXT WEEK: The girl who committed a deadly crime

Doolan on a crocodile hunt. He was with Syd Kyle-Little aboard the cutter Amity (below) when she mysteriously sank while anchored in the Blyth River. Both men were asleep below, but surfaced in the crocodile-infested water

Uncle Conal and the Great O'Toole

by ***HUGH MICHAEL HOGAN***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

'Tis the fine, charitable man he was that day—just like a saint to the travellers

My uncle Conal came out of the pub where he had stopped off for a quart of porter, and brushed at the corners of his mouth with one of his huge red fists. He bellowed across the street: "Come up, then, will you, now?"

I fetched the little trap smartly about and halted at the door of the pub. My uncle Conal looked on with amusement dancing in his watery blue eyes, and when I dropped the reins he came towards me.

"Hah!" he boomed. "'Tis the grand boy y'are, Michael, to be sure." He made to come aboard the trap, and I held my breath lest the pony should bolt with me. My uncle Conal was a fine, big, red-haired man, over six foot four and heavy with it, and when he climbed into that trap you could hear the pony grunt. Sometimes, when he trod on the backstep firmly, he would lift all four feet of the poor startled beast right off the ground.

"What's this we've got here?" said he, climbing in beside me, and eyeing the medallion on the dashboard.

"It's Saint Christopher," I told him. "The patron saint of travellers. It's for your birthday."

"For me birthday, then, is it?"

"Yes. It'll keep you safe on the roads." I was sure he was laughing to himself, and I added: "Don't you believe it, Uncle?"

My uncle Conal threw up his great red head and laughed. Tears of merriment ran down his freckled cheeks.

"Well, now, Michael, d'ye see—it's not that I doubt the powers of Saint Christopher, at all. 'Tis just that I'm wonderin' how the ould gintleman intends to behave himself this time, God forgive me."

"*This* time?"

"Well—d'ye see, in a manner of speakin', like, we've met before, Saint Chris and I—and a right ould time he gave me, too, the same one. If you'll just give me a minute to light me pipe, now, I'll tell you all about it. . . ."

For some time we jogged along in silence, while my uncle fished out his corn-cob pipe and lit it. He sat down on the side seat to do this, tilting the trap over at an alarming angle, and causing the poor little horse to turn in the shafts and throw him a reproachful look. Finally, when his head was almost hidden in the clouds of evil-smelling smoke, he got to his feet and took the reins again.

"Saint Christopher," he said. "It was like this, then. . . ." He puffed furiously at his pipe. "It was like this. . . .

"It must have been—oh, donkeys' years ago. I was just a young feller at the time. 'Twas the day of the first charabancs.

"I was in me twenties, and just goin' through a phase, as you might say. Thanks be to God, it didn't last long, though. Took meself very seriously, I did—wore drainpipe trousers and patent leather boots. Sure, you wouldn't have known me.

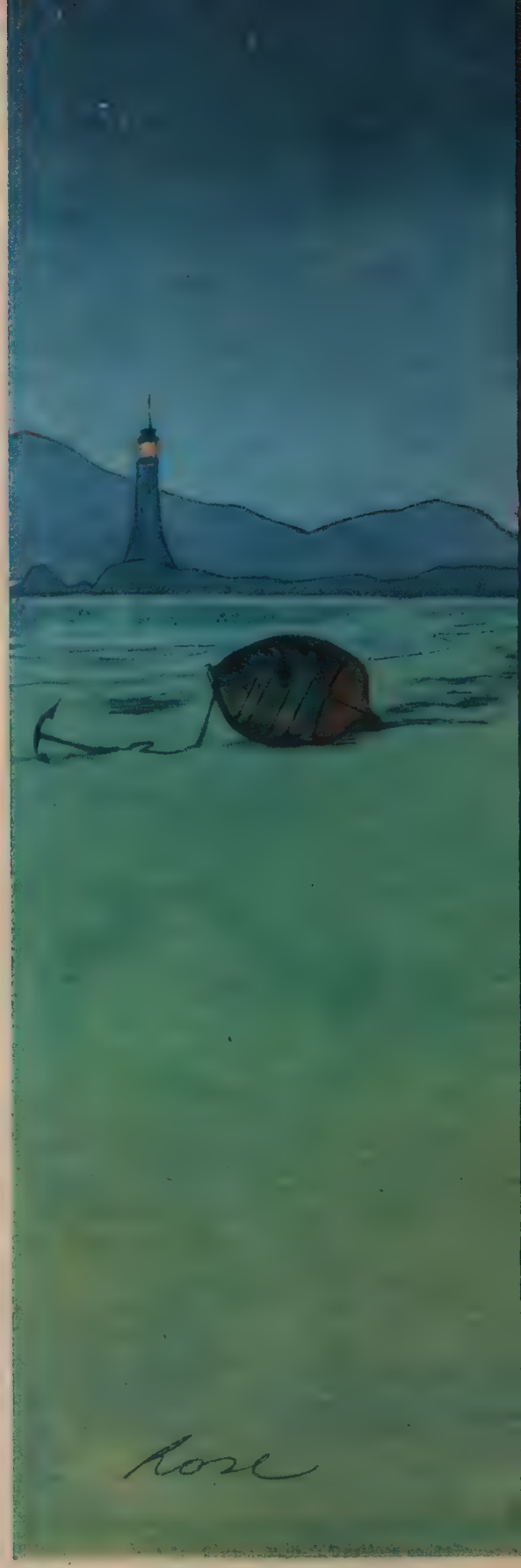
"Well, now, I took meself very seriously, as I say. I was a member o' nearly every church organization in the district, so help me. Knights of Saint Columbus, choir, Young Men's Guild, dramatics, everythin'. Oh, I was a very good man in me early days, now, Michael. Sure, you wouldn't have known me.

"I just forget the exact occasion it was, but 'twas the annual outin' of one o' these church societies. Everybody was goin', not only from our own little parish, but from every parish around. Charabancs were arranged, an' meetin' places for all the men, and what would we be doin' at all, but off we'd go to Arklow for the day."

"Arklow?" I interrupted. "Is that where——?"

"'Tis where you see the Meetin' o' the Waters, Michael. But 'twas more than the waters that met there that day. Everybody was there: Mulligans and Sullivans, Cassidys, Raffertys, O'Hallorans, Callaghans, O'Caseys and Paceys. And by the time we arrived, what with stoppin' off at one place and another on the way, sure a fair amount o' grog had been consumed. I reckoned it up afterwards, now, that if all the porter inside them boys that day had been turned into a mill race, there'd have been nearly enough liquid to have ground a bushel o' corn.

"But I'm gettin' ahead of meself. I'd meant to tell you that, on the way down to Arklow, I had the seat next to the driver. And what d'ye think he should have there on his dashboard, now, but a fine big badge of Saint Christopher. A right royal specimen it was, too. Big as a grandfather's clock, nearly. And I got to thinkin' awhiles, that the good saint and meself looked very much alike. There he was



"Just as I was about to return to the

in front o' me nose: a fine, big feller, with muscles like a drayhorse, and a great mat o' hair fallin' down across his forehead. Begob, I thought, he looks just as I did meself when I played the part o' Brian Boru in the parish play."

My uncle Conal paused at this point in his tale. He produced a match and, striking it on the seat of his breeches, relit his pipe.

"We got to Arklow about midday. Out came the hampers and bottles. Everybody joined in together, and it was the fine time we made of it until the time came for goin' back."

"Did you have games and things, Uncle?" I asked.

"Oh, we did, now. We did indeed. Sure, didn't we have the MacBrides and the Dooleys in the same party, and they not able to stand the sight o' one another. 'Twas the right old ree-raw they had, too, the same ones, and they

coaches, what should I see but a body on the sand. 'Come up,' says I. 'Come on now, we're leaving.' But he lay like Finnigan at the wake"

ready enough to cut the bowels out of every mother's son in the ten parishes. Sure, the claret was flowin' freely enough before they'd done. Oh, we had games, right enough."

"Was it one of them that destroyed you, Uncle?"

"Who? Them? Hah, don't be talkin', Michael. Sure, I could have destroyed them entirely with one hand behind me back. No, ye little omadhaun, 'twas meself that wrought me own destruction.

"I went to sleep, d'ye see. And when I woke up 'twas gettin' dusk, and they were all after makin' tracks for home. Parties was lendin' a hand here an' there, pickin' up the others, who was still sleepin'. I gave a hand meself waking some o' them up and gettin' them aboard the coaches.

"And then, just before movin' off, one o' the damn things broke down. All the people aboard it had to get off, and go and find seats on the others.

"Well now, 'twas at this point that all me troubles began. D'ye see, while the people were gettin' out of the broken-down coach, who should come up to me, then, but ould Canon Flynn.

"'D'ye think, Conal,' sez he, 'that we've accounted for everybody?'

"'Oh, I do, Canon,' sez I.

"'Are you sure there's none left on the beach?'

"'Well now, Canon,' sez I, 'if it'll ease your mind any, I'll just have a last gliff round.'

"And off I went, down to one end of the beach, and then back to the other. And just as I was about to return to the coaches, what should I see but a body on the sand.

"'Come up,' sez I, goin' over to him. 'Come on now, we're leavin'. But he lay like Finnigan at the wake. I gave him the toe of me boot, but he still didn't move.

"He lay like a dead man. I was just after decidin' to give him some more of me boot, when I heard a coach start up. Quick as a flash I remembered that badge. 'Here, now,' sez I to meself, 'is your chance to be just like that saint, an' help the poor traveller on his way.' I bent down, picked up me man, and made for the coaches. Just like Saint Chris himself I must have looked, too, as I went up the beach."

My uncle Conal puffed hard at his pipe again, pressing down the dottle in its bowl with a finger as gnarled as his blackthorn.

"Was he heavy?" I asked.

"Hah well, he wasn't so bad at the first." He looked chidingly at the badge on the trap's dash board. "He got heavier, though, as time went on.

"Well, I got back to where the rest of them

waited. Lollin' about in their seats, they were, singin' about their poor ould Irish mothers, with the tears fair rollin' down their cheeks.

"'Is there anybody here,' I sez, 'knows this man?'

"I couldn't be heard for the din. I hauled me bold hero aboard and held him up. 'Does anybody claim this man?'

"'Strike a light,' sez one, 'I can't see him.' There was no lights in the coaches in those days.

"'Put him out in front of the headlights,' shouts another, 'whiles I have a look at his puss, then.'

"I carried him off the coach again. Begob, he was gettin' heavier already. I stuck him out in front o' the lights and somebody yells: ''Tis one o' the O'Tooles.'

"'Where's he from, then?'

"'Now, if I knew which O'Toole it was, exactly, maybe I'd be able to tell you that better. 'Tis Felix, I think, but it might be his brother.'

"'Where's he from, then?'

"'From Dublin itself, I think. He's not from this coach at all.'

"Well, and just as I was wonderin' whether I'd strength enough in me to peddle him about till I found the right coach, what happens but the coach in front starts up, and the others after it.

"'Climb aboard,' sez the driver of the coach I was in. 'Sure, we'll be stoppin' soon enough to let the boys wet their whistles. You'll be able to swop him over then, aisy enough.'

"'Twas sound advice, too. Fair puffed, I was, from carryin' the dead weight of him. There wasn't room in the coach, though, to set him down anywhere, and I'd to nurse him on me knee like a little baby. A fine-lookin' baby he made, too, the same one, with his head thrown back an' his mouth wide open. Sure, all he needed was an apple in his mouth and a paper collar on to have passed for pork anywhere.

"And begob, he got heavier every minute. He put on two stone between Rathdrum and Wicklow, where we had the first stop. But, bad luck to him, I didn't get on any better with him there than I did in Arklow. D'ye see, there was a powerful lot o' throats waitin' for a gargle by then, and not all could get into the same public.

I SPENT the whole o' that stop humpin' skin-the-goat from one place to the other, seein' if anybody would claim him. I couldn't get in to the half o' them.

"God help us, I was glad in the end to get him back to me own coach, so I was. 'Twas a hot night, and the sweat was fairly pourin' out o' me.

"'Twas as bad in Bray, the next place we stopped at. There was a big pub there, all right, but by the time I got down it was full as a flutter.

"An' there I was now, with this queer feller draped over me back, pushin' me way round an' peddlin' him like a puck. An' I with me own throat as dry as O'Doherty's drum, and not able to wet it.

"And, bedad, I'd a bit o' worse luck to come: just when I'd decided to leave me bold hero on the stairs, and walk quietly away, who should I bump into, now, but ould Canon Flynn, takin a glass of stout for his health.

"'Who's that you've got there, Conal?' sez he.

"'Some fool O'Toole, Canon,' sez I.

"Well, I'll say this for the ould Canon, he did at least get somebody to help me back aboard with O'Toole. Gave me the dregs of his stout, too, before he'd let me go.

"Then off we set for Leopardstown, the next stop. God bless us and save us, by the time we got there I could hardly move at all. Me legs were so cramped on the way, what with the weight of him, that they fell open altogether and stayed that way, and as the coach jolted along he went up and down between them. 'Twas a nightmare, I tell you. Up and down, up and down, like a fiddler's elbow. I'd to get two fellers to lift me out of it when we got to the pub, so I had. And as luck would have it, one said he recognized O'Toole.

"'He's from Dublin itself. From Portobello.'

"'Twas then that I thought what I'd do. I'd leave O'Toole where he was, and the divil rattle him. Meself, I'd get into one o' the other coaches.

"But sure, I'd no luck at all. Hardly had the glass touched me lips when up comes ould Canon Flynn again.

"'How's that poor feller, Conal?' sez he.

"'He's still out, Canon,' sez I.

"'Is he bad, then?'

"'Bad, is it? Sure, he looks just about ready for the last rites, then.'

"He looks hard at me. Sez he: 'Will you promise me one thing, Conal?'

"'What's that, then?'

"'Will you see him safe home for me?'

"'Ah, now, Canon,' sez I.

"He looks at me soft-like. He'd a terrible persuasive way with him, had the ould Canon, when he liked. God rest his soul.

"'For me, Conal,' he sez. 'For me, now.'

"'Ah, you're a hard man, Canon,' sez I. 'I'll do it, then, if you'll tell me how to get him into Dublin. To Portobello.' Fair choked, I was, at the thought of it."

At this point my uncle Conal broke off to relight his pipe. But I was impatient to hear the rest of the story.

"And did he tell you how?" I said. "The canon, I mean?"

"Hah, his job was easy. One of the coaches was goin' into Dublin anyway, and sure, all I had to do was to hump the queer feller from one coach to the other. He weighed just on a ton then. But 'twas when we got into Dublin itself that me troubles began."

"Couldn't you find his house, Uncle Conal?" I said. "Why didn't you go through his pockets to see if his address was in them?"

"Don't be talkin', will you. Sure, I'd done that long back, and all I could find was a couple o' betting slips for the Leopardstown meetin', and a letter from somebody in America, askin' had the constable recovered from the beatin' the writer'd given him."

"What did you do, then?"

"Will you whisht and I'll tell you, now."

He puffed a bank of blue smoke at me. "Well, now, 'twas midnight by the time we got off the coach, in Dublin. Me legs were so shaky I'd to stand there markin' time for a full five minutes before I could walk on them. My boyo was stiff as a flagpole, lyin' where I'd put him, against the wall. But he'd recovered his powers of speech, to a certain extent. 'Aaaahh,' he was moanin'. 'Oooohh.' But divil a bit o' sense could I get either out of him or in. I could ha' thrown him in the Liffey. Instead, I put him across me back again, and boarded a Portobello tram. Full fare they charged me for him, too."

"Well, at last we got there. I hauled me proud boyo off the tram. And 'twas there, right at the bus stop, I had the only bit o' luck happened to me that day: I bumped straight into a constable, a decent skin.

"'Me name's Donelin,' sez I. I laid out the

Loneliest island in the world

by D. M. BOOY

The fascinating story of a man who found enchantment and peace among the strange, remote people of Tristan da Cunha

Our fight to save the Avon

Shakespeare's river was dying of neglect. Douglas Barwell looked on in anger—and decided to do something about it . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

"Who's that you've got there, Conal?" asked old Canon Flynn, taking a glass of stout for his health. "Some fool O'Toole," said my uncle

body on the pavement, under a street lamp. 'Could you be introducin' me to this one?'

"The constable takes one look. 'Hah,' sez he, ' 'tis Cornelius O'Toole. Sure, I'd know him anywhere, the shortweightin' scut. Keeps a little grocery in D'Arcy Street. Do you want me lock him up, is it?'

"'That just about the size of it now,' sez I. 'Sure there's nothin' in the world I'd like better, but owin' to a series of misfortunes I'm obliged to see him safe home.'

"'Is that it?'

"'That's just it, now.'

"'Well, then. I'm sorry for you, now, for D'Arcy Street is all of three furlongs from here, and you'll not find a cab at this end o' Dublin tonight.'

"Well, then, the constable tells me which way is D'Arcy Street, and I picks up me burden again and sets off; and begob, I never want another night like that one as long as I live. What with stoppin' off every few minutes to get me breath, and to change me hould of O'Toole, 'twas after half-past one in the morning before I made D'Arcy Street.

"Drenched like a horse at a ploughin' match, I was, with me collar and tie thrown away in the struggle, and me feet in me two smart boots burnin' like fire. And what d'ye think was waitin' for me, when I got into D'Arcy Street at last?"

"I don't know, Uncle Conal."

"Another constable, it was. Shone his bull's-eye straight in me puss an' started in at once to accuse me of every crime in the book, the dirty blackguard. Told me that everythin' I said would be used as evidence. Begob, it took me the best part o' half an hour to convince the big gobskite that I wasn't the dead spit o' Judas Iscariot altogether. An' when I did get it into his big fiddle head, he told me the terrible news, bad cess to him."

"What was that, Uncle?"

"'Twas that O'Toole lived, not over his shop like any decent man, but five blocks away, in his own private house."

"And did you take him there?"

"So help me, Michael, I did just that. I got Cornelius O'Toole Esquire on to me back again, and just made his house by two-thirty."

"You did jolly well," I said.

"Jolly well, is it? Hah, I'd not finished yet, though. D'ye see, when I got to the house itself, I carried me bold Cornelius up to the front step, and I set him down."

"Was he still out, Uncle?"

He puffed at his pipe before replying: "Fast asleep and snorin'. An' I was just after turnin' away for home when I stopped again.

"I well remember it to this day, standin' there in that street. The moon was like a big gold sovereign, just over the rooftops, an' a cat was yowlin' away beyond. And, sez I to meself, 'Conal Donelin,' sez I, ' 'tis the fine, charitable man you've been this day, so you have, and the great Saint Christopher himself has nothin' on you when it comes to humpin' loads.

"'Sure,' sez I in me foolish pride, 'an' didn't you pick up that poor man from the beach after everyone else had ignored him? An' didn't you carry him home on your own knee in the coach? And haven't you humped him half across Dublin to bring him to his own little home, and will you be leavin' the poor skin now on the doorstep, with his poor little wife like to be cryin' her eyes out for him inside, the way she'll not know where's he's got to?"

"So what did I do, now, but I turned back to O'Toole. I took out me handkerchief and wiped his face clean, and with what there was left of me hat I dusted him down, and rubbed his shoes. I took a fine big rose out of the next-door garden and stuck it in his buttonhole. And when I'd finished the valetin', I pulled at the doorbell.

"There wasn't a sound. I pulled again, and then, thinkin' that the bell was broken. I knocked on the door.

"Well, I knocked, and I knocked, and I knocked. An' when I still got no answer, I lost me patience, an' I beat on that door to wake the dead in Glasnevin. And what happens, then, but the window of the house next door goes up, and a woman with her hair in curlin' papers looks down at me.

"' 'Tis no good your knockin' away there, Mister,' sez she. 'The O'Tooles are away since Sunday last.'

"'What's that?' sez I.

"'They'll not be back for a fortnight. The whole family's gone to Arklow for their holidays.' "

When I had finished laughing I began to see that perhaps I had not chosen the most suitable of presents for my uncle's birthday. I said as much. By now, we had got back to the farm, and I could see my Aunt Bridget coming to open the gate for us.

Suddenly, my uncle Conal wheeled sharply across the road, causing a motorist behind us to apply his brakes sharply and bellow his anger.

"Hah," said my uncle, "I think things will be easier this time." He nodded at the badge on the dashboard, and jerked his whip in the direction of the departing motorist. "Sure, the good saint is workin' for us already."

He threw up his great red head and laughed heartily. "He's a good bit o' ground to make up, too, the same one." THE END

Hunt for the sleeping killers

by KEITH ELLIS

Peter Dawton tracks the bombs and mines that still litter Britain. For him they are loaded with danger

Dawton (right) and his men dug a twenty-foot shaft to destroy a bomb at Hampton Court. Every day new reports are received of suspected bombs or mines

THE hole was in the bank of a stream. The farmer had first noticed it after an air-raid during the war. Over the years he had forgotten about it, but now mechanical excavators were about to widen the stream in a flood prevention scheme. Fearing an explosion, he told the police that he might have an unexploded bomb on his property.

Next morning, Captain Peter ("Sam") Dawton, a twenty-seven year old bomb disposal officer, came to examine the hole. It was a likely size—about ten inches across—and entered the bank at an angle that he would have expected a bomb to make. "Were there any other bombs round here?" he asked.

The farmer pointed out two craters in an adjoining field and said that there was a similar crater in a field on the other side. The bombs had all dropped together on the night the hole appeared. Dawton noted that the craters and the hole were exactly in line and that the hole was placed in the middle of a gap in the line of craters.

"I guessed there *was* an unexploded bomb," he says, "and a few days later, we started digging. We found a hundred-pounder bomb. It was one of our simplest jobs."

Twelve years after the end of the war, Britain is still littered with explosive débris. According to Major Arthur Hartley, M.B.E., second-in-command of the Royal Engineers' bomb disposal headquarters at Horsham, Sussex, the authorities know the whereabouts of more than four hundred unexploded enemy bombs. Unless disturbed, they are unlikely to cause damage, and have been officially abandoned.

More serious are the minefields planted round our beaches to blow up enemy landing craft. Troops stationed at Hastings, Sussex, and Mundesley, Norfolk, are still clearing the last two. The Hastings field will be cleared this summer. That near Mundesley will take a year longer.

Besides these known dangers, bomb disposal headquarters get an average of one report a day of a suspected bomb or mine that they did not know about. Reports about bombs are passed to Dawton, the tall, soldierly officer commanding Number 2 Bomb Disposal Troop at Cosham, near Portsmouth. From his headquarters in Fort Widley on Portsdown Hill, he and his staff of fifty civilians and eighteen Servicemen deal with unexploded bombs and anti-aircraft shells throughout England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands.

Bombs may turn up anywhere. Often they are in woods, marshes or estuaries. But they are also found in back gardens and busy streets. Almost every summer, at least one bomb is washed up on the Wallasey shore of the River Mersey. Recently, gravediggers found one in an Aberdeen cemetery.

Eighteen months ago, workmen were dredging the River Ouse at Linton, Yorkshire. Suddenly, the dredge operator noticed that one of his buckets contained not mud but a bomb. He threw the machinery into reverse and tumbled the bomb back into the river. To make it as safe as possible, he heaped a pile of mud over it.

Dawton found it comparatively easy to move the mud with compressed air apparatus mounted on a raft. But to find the bomb he had to borrow a frogman from the navy. The frogman walked backwards and forwards across the river bed with a bomb locator connected with instruments on the bank. Each time he came out, Dawton told him where the readings had been strongest. He then started again from there.

"He ended up by putting the locator actually on the bomb," says Dawton. "He identified it as a British five-hundred-pounder and then blew it up." A keen fisherman, he adds wistfully: "We killed a lot of fish that day."

Beach mines, which are washed up at the rate of one a week, are much more dangerous than bombs. Thick, flat cylinders mounted on a square base-plate, they are not easily recognizable. When they have been in the water for several years, they appear harmless because of a coating of mud and barnacles. But they are still deadly. Two years ago, a mine killed five boys at Swanage. They were trying to open it with a shoe-horn.

For this reason, Dawton regards mine disposal as being the most urgent job of all. Often he goes out in the middle of the night to destroy a mine in the limited time that the tide allows. "I never move a mine," he says. "I blow it up on the spot. If there's any damage, the Claims Commission makes a settlement."

Bombs can usually be treated in a more leisurely fashion. As soon as possible after receiving a report, either Dawton or his sergeant-major investigates. After noting the size of hole and angle of entry ("bombs rarely make vertical holes"), he inquires into the history. Sometimes a local inhabitant may remember first seeing the hole after an air-raid. Occasionally, police or civil defence records mention suspected unexploded bombs.

Dawton is not impressed if the hole has appeared long after the war. "Bombs don't pull zip-fasteners behind them," he says. "A hole that appears suddenly is more likely to be subsidence from a well, a broken drain or even an underground stream."

Some reports are fantastic. A man claimed to hear the ticking of a time fuse in his back garden. A woman said that when an aeroplane passed over her house during the war, she heard the bomb doors opening. Another told Dawton that she heard the bomb hit the roof and roll down the slates before making a hole in her garden. Dawton dug—and found a box containing a dead cat. Buried a few weeks before, the box had collapsed and caused a slight subsidence.

Major Hartley calculates that nine-tenths of all reports are discredited on investigation. Dawton points out, however: "Our job is not only to say: 'Yes, there is a bomb.' It's just as much to say: 'No, there isn't.'"

BOMBS usually penetrate to between twelve and twenty-five feet. They travel at an angle and are sometimes deflected by rocks on the way down. To discover the exact position, Dawton sends out a sergeant with four or five men who drill between six and a dozen three-inch holes round the suspected area and lower into each a locator. By comparing the readings, they can plot the position and depth fairly accurately.

After sinking a shaft to within a foot or so of the estimated position, the sergeant starts to probe. On finding the bomb, he calls Dawton.

About half of the bombs now being found are one-hundred-pounders. They present only

one difficulty. The fuse contained a small quantity of picric acid which over the years has reacted with the metal of the casing to form iron picrate, a substance so explosive that the slightest friction will set it off.

To get rid of the picrate, Dawton drills a small hole into the fuse, extracts the air and injects water. The water dissolves the picrate and, after two hours, he can safely extract the fuse by a remote control key.

He next tackles the explosive in the bomb. Usually, after a tap with a hammer and chisel, the base plate easily unscrews. If not, he cuts a four-inch circular hole in the casing with a compressed air-cutter, called a trepanner, which he straps on to the bomb. One of his men then directs the nozzle of a steam generator at the exposed explosive which melts, pours out and solidifies on the ground. It is then broken into pieces which can be safely destroyed by burning.

Dawton is then left with the empty case. "The aim of bomb disposal," he sums up, "is to remove the fuse, burn the explosive and return the case for salvage."

Some bombs are more difficult. The larger German bombs often had a clockwork time fuse. Even now, fuses which stopped before running down completely may start again if jerked. For this reason, one of the disposal team keeps a constant watch with a stethoscope as soon as a large bomb is discovered.

When Dawton arrives, he clamps on to it a strong electro-magnet which stops the fuse and often permanently wrecks it. But he can't remove it: the Germans fitted these fuses with a device which sets off the bomb as soon as they are drawn out. Dawton has to steam out the explosive with the fuse in position. Only then can he blow the fuse up—in the empty case.

The most dangerous bomb he has had to deal with was also the smallest. Nine months ago, the police at Polegate, Sussex, rang to say that they had found a butterfly bomb. These bombs, weighing only four pounds, were dropped in large containers which opened in mid-air and scattered them over a wide area. They consist of a small explosive charge joined by a rod to a pair of "wings" which steadied their flight to the ground. They are so sensitive that a touch is usually enough to set them off.

DAWTON was told that police records showed that a container of these bombs had been dropped during the war. It was known exactly how many bombs the container carried and after a careful sweep of the area, a wartime bomb disposal unit had accounted for all but one. Now, fifteen years later, it had turned up. It lay on the bank of a stream. "I put a ring of sandbags round it and blew it up," says Dawton. "I suspect that it had been in the stream and that someone had lifted it out. He must have been a brave man."

A career officer trained at Sandhurst and the Military College of Science at Shrivenham, Dawton came into bomb disposal two years ago after taking a month's course at Horsham. He expects to be posted to another job in six months' time. "Bomb disposal is not particularly dangerous," he says, "but it would be if you were careless or ham-fisted. You must know what you're about." Since the war, four bomb disposal men have lost their lives, all in a single incident while clearing a minefield.

Unless disturbed, unexploded bombs are unlikely to go off spontaneously. Early in the war, civil defence workers found a crater in a Rotherhithe street and presumed that it was the result of a hundred-pound bomb exploding in the ordinary way.

Later, they went on special courses and began to think again. Although the crater had been the right size, there was no blast or splinter damage nearby. But there was no danger and they decided not to raise the matter. This year, plans were announced for a new bridge over Canada Dock. The road in which the bomb had fallen had to be rebuilt. Fearing the effect of the roadwork, the civil defence workers reported their suspicions to the police.

Dawton's instruments reacted violently. After digging through one foot of granite roadsets and another foot of reinforced concrete, his men quickly reached their object. "The impact had broken it up," says Dawton. "The nose was in one place, the tail in another. The body was twisted and flattened. The explosive had burst out. It was a 'Satan,' a two-ton bomb, the biggest I have ever found." THE END

A 2,500-lb. bomb is removed from near University College Hospital, London. It had lain beneath a partly demolished building for nine years

Far, far the mountain peak

by JOHN MASTERS

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

It was heartbreaking for Emily—this pathetic husband who had lost the will to command. . . . And just when the people of Rudwal needed the Peter Savage of old

Harnarayan spoke harshly. "Why should we get the British out of trouble?" he asked. "We will not co-operate." And Peter just sat there—in silence

AFTER their bitter parting, it was months before Emily heard news of her husband, Peter Savage. It was brought by Peggy Walsh—a vengeful Peggy Walsh who travelled all the way to Wales to relish this moment of triumph.

"He's supposed to have been arrested as a deserter," she said. Her façade of friendliness lifted and Emily wondered how it was possible to nourish hatred so long. Years ago Peggy had been in love with Peter. But it was Emily who married him and Peggy, despite her marriage to Harry Walsh, still couldn't forgive her.

Peggy continued: "When Peter left you, he must have gone straight to join up—as a private, my dear, and under an assumed name: Smith, I heard. They sent him out to France, and then in the big battles in the late summer—Harry was in them, too—Peter ran away."

It was ludicrous to think of the man she had known—Lieutenant-Colonel P. Savage of the 13th Gurkhas—running away from a fight. Such a thing could happen only if his whole outlook had changed, and that might not be bad at all. It was his ruthlessness, his galvanic ambition, first in India and then at home, that caused the break-up between them. . . . When, earlier in the war, he led their dearest friend, Gerry Wilcot, to his death in Italy, Emily called him a murderer—and swore that she never wanted to see him again.

But now? Glancing up, Emily saw the joy on her torturer's face. Peggy said: "I came down, really, to tell you that you ought to think of taking the children out of the country—for a time at any rate. Peter's changed out of all recognition. I don't think he's quite sane."

Emily felt so full of pride and anger and her love for Peter that when she spoke her voice was thick and deep. "Don't be silly," she said. "I must go and see him. . . ."

PART SIX

Death Of A City

PETER was staying at his grandfather's house in London. Emily went there. There was a long wait after she had rung the bell and then Peter opened the door. He showed no surprise at seeing her and neither stepped towards her nor recoiled. She held herself in check and said only: "Peter—I've come to see you."

"Come in," he said. She held up her cheek to be kissed and, after a hesitation, he kissed her. She saw that he was wearing his 13th Gurkhas uniform, but with no medal ribbons, and the rank badges were those of a lieutenant.

"Let's go upstairs," she said. When they entered the drawing-room, she went quickly to

For a fraction of a second Harry hesitated. Then he ran on . . . alone. Above him the high, many-windowed wall broke like a wave of ocean

the window, stooped over the old general before he could get up, and kissed him.

"I thought you'd come," he said. "How are the children?"

"Very well, Grandfather," she said. "I left them at home—in Minden Square, I mean."

The old man nodded. He rose slowly to his feet, the stick trembling under his veined hand. "Now I will lie down," he said. Emily made a motion of dissent, but his blue eyes glittered sharply and he said: "Do not be foolish, Emily. You have not come to talk about the weather? Also, I need to lie down." He walked slowly out of the room.

She sat down on the ornately carved sofa and quietly pulled Peter down beside her. It was a strange feeling, indeed, to direct Peter where he should go, as though he were a child.

He began to speak at once. She listened and watched.

He was not mad, certainly not in any way yet known to the doctors. He was not physically ill, as Gerry had been ill when they came back from Maru. He was not angry or depressed, or perhaps inhabited by any other emotion at all. When he related something funny that had happened, he smiled; once he laughed lightly; a few times he told of resentment over trivial injustices; but humour and resentment were emotions that he described, not ones he felt.

She felt that, since retreating from the battlefield, he had deliberately allowed himself to bleed into some kind of death of the personality. He had no strength left to make decisions of any kind. Decision was an act that had become, for him, synonymous with murder, so he had made himself incapable of deciding.

They'd kept him in a prison camp near Abbeville. At last the young gunner officer, Gale, had been sent for, and the colonel of the battalion Peter had been with, and there had been many interviews, ending with one with a very senior general at the War Office. She could hardly blame them for not knowing what to do, when one group of witnesses insisted that Private Smith be given the Victoria Cross and an immediate commission; a second that Private Smith be shot as a deserter; and a third, that the whole affair must be part of some further supersecret exploit of the galvanic Colonel Savage.

In the end they had torn up the twelve recommendations for a V.C., stripped him of his acting rank, and sent him away to await shipment back to the 13th Gurkhas in Mesopotamia.

"What will you do?" she asked when he had finished.

"They're sending me back to the regiment," he said.

"But I thought you didn't want to fight any more."

He said, "I don't think I do. Just after the battle, on the Somme, I would have refused to go. I don't feel the same now. If that's what they think's right, I'll go. I'm not afraid."

"No," she said, almost absently, "I know that." He would accept another's decision, even to go back to war, but would not decide himself, even to refuse.

They were silent for a long time. At length she said: "Peter, do you remember what we were talking about the night the telegrams came, about the war?"

"Yes," he said at once. "About love. Peace. And then the telegrams came and I found that love wasn't enough for me. I had to win."

"That couldn't happen again, could it?" she asked.

"I don't think so," he said. "I don't want

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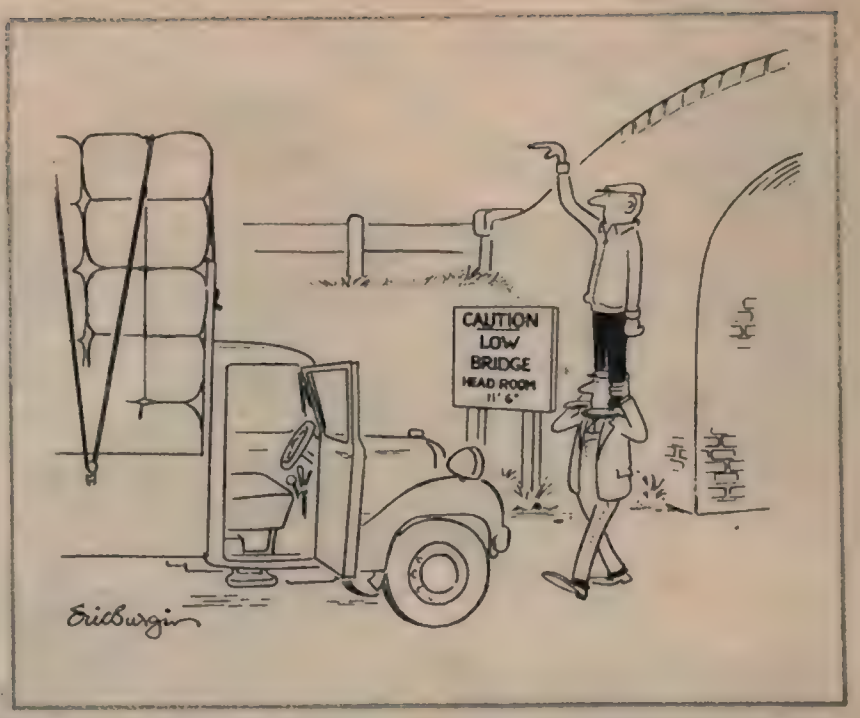

to win, and I physically couldn't. What I touch, I destroy. I'm not going to touch anything."

She said: "That won't work, either. You're alive, and it's no good trying to pretend you're dead. I want you to apply to be released from the army and go back to India—to your old job as District Commissioner for Rudwal. We can arrange that, between us."

"Perhaps I'd destroy Rudwal," he said seriously. "I—really, I wouldn't know what to do that was safe."

"I'll help you," she said. "I and the children, Peter. You can't hurt us, because we love you."

"That's when you can be hurt the most," he said sadly.

"It isn't true," she cried. "You've got to forget and begin again, because you're not the same person any more, any more than I am. And I won't have you cowering before me or anyone else. Did they take your medals away?"

He shook his head.

She said, "Well, put the ribbons back. You won't be in uniform long." She stood up. "Will you come home with me now?"

"If you want me to," he said.

"No," she answered, watching him as he rose to his feet, so that he stood a little taller than she. "You must decide."

Now there was no light, not even the old glacial cold, in his eyes. After a time, the words coming slowly up from the depths, he said, "Yes, I'd like to come—if you think it's best."

"I do," she said.

He said, "I'll tell Grandfather. I suppose he'll be surprised."

She said, "I don't think so. He's lived a long time. Where are your clothes . . . ?"

Extracts from letters written by Emily Savage from Rudwal, India . . . May, 1917, to September, 1920.

May 2, 1917

Dear Grandfather,

It is a fortnight since we arrived back here, but we have been so busy settling in that I have had no time to write. . . . People were very good to us all the way up. Many who had known Peter in the old days went out of their way to be nice. I nearly cried once or twice, because I wasn't expecting it. When we got to Rudwal at last there was a tremendous to-do, with all sorts of people who had probably never spoken to each other for years getting together to make a big reception at the station.

The Old Captain was there in command so to speak, and Adam Khan, his son—who was at Cambridge with Peter—and Dr. Parkash, and Harnarayan the Congress leader. Adam Khan was the local Congress leader until early this year, but at their last elections Harnarayan beat him. . . .

Peter and Rodney send their love. Rodney wants to know how you can blow out ninety-one candles with one breath on your birthday cake.

November 13, 1918

Dear Grandfather,

I can hardly believe it's over. When we got the telegram I suddenly started crying. . . . A company of British soldiers marching through Rudwal was cheered all the way, which is unusual.

I find myself remembering people I have not seen since '07, and wondering what happened to them. Unless Harry Walsh was killed in the last few days, he will have escaped.

I can't help wondering what effect it will have had on him. The death of Cadez on Maru in '13 affected him very much, I know, so the war must have been one long, mad nightmare to him—and he not able to show it, because that's the sort of man he is. . . .

September 12, 1919

Dearest Grandfather,

Yes, I am afraid that affairs here are just as bad as the newspapers have painted them—worse in some ways. There was a little violence in Rudwal, but what is far worse is the change of atmosphere—all through that awful Dyer business in Amritsar in April. . . .

Harnarayan and his group are now saying that they will never get justice from England, and that they must work for total independence. This is the first time such an idea has been heard of, though only the extremists talk like that.

You asked me to tell you honestly how Peter was. Well, Grandfather, that is difficult to answer, except to say that he is the same as when he was with you after he came back from the Somme. He is so gentle and kind, but it is almost worse than brutality because I feel that it is not a gentleness of the strong, as it used to be.

The Commissioner has been getting more and more outspoken, and has even warned me that the new Lieutenant-Governor is very dissatisfied with Peter—but you know what the Indian Civil Service is. They had their chance to refuse to take him back in '17, but they couldn't believe he had changed so much (with little or nothing of it showing on the surface) so they took him, and now he would have to do something terrible, or *not* do something in a terrible situation, before they could get rid of him.

The awful thing is that I feel more and more strongly, and more and more often, that this is just what will happen. Troubles are piling up like clouds.

I have been thinking about your suggestion that Peter try his hand at mountaineering again, and, though it might be dangerous, and it

probably won't work, it seems the only thing left. So I am going to arrange for us all to spend a month in the Northern Tehsils. Perhaps the mountains will arouse him. They meant so much in the old days. I think I would die of happiness if I heard him say, the way he used to: "I'm going to get to the top of that mountain, at all costs."

Talking about mountains, you may not have heard that Harry Walsh is going to bring out another expedition to Maru next year. We saw a little snippet about it in the *Civil And Military*—no other details.

September 13, 1922

Dearest Grandfather,

We got back from the Northern Tehsils on the second. Peter didn't do any climbing while we were there. Harry Walsh's expedition began to gather a week ago. Harry and Peggy will be here this evening. Peggy wrote to me a few months ago, more or less making up a quarrel that had estranged us, so we will be seeing each other, but not, I fear, very cordially.

It really seems as if the Maru must be climbed this time. Besides Harry there are seven other climbers —all English—and a doctor. An enormous number of porters and pack animals have been hired for this expedition, and Sherpa porters brought from Nepal, so that the expedition's going to look like an army when it leaves here. . . .

The harvest was not good, in spite of heavy rains. There is a good deal of sickness, and Dr. Parkash has left, feeling rather bitter. The Congress people forced him to resign.

Rodney is eight now and I have made up my mind that he must go home at the end of this cold weather. He is thin and quite sallow, in spite of a month in the mountains. I will be writing soon to Cox's to book passages for myself and the children in March. Peter has not made up his mind yet. He is eligible for furlough next year.

Your loving granddaughter,

Emily.

P.S. Peter will be coming home with us. He is going to resign from the service. I don't know what he will do.

OPINION—1

Those who never change their opinions love themselves more than they love truth.

Joseph Joubert

Emily dipped the pen in the ink and carefully wrote the address—Major-General R. Savage, C.B., 293 Nashe Street, Kensington, London, England. As long as she could write that address and that name, and in her mind see the old man with the eagle's eyes, there was still something firm left in the world.

For almost four years she had been fighting against a host of enemies, seen and unseen. She had used every particle of her energy and her will to make Peter feel; and then, when she knew that she did not have anything left, there was the house to run, and Rodney and Elizabeth to bring up in love and care, and the protection of Peter's reputation.

How many disputes had she solved in his name since that June night in 1917, when, feeling as though she were robbing the Bank of England, she had done it the first time? How many letters had she written and put to him for his signature—explaining, accepting, refusing; brusque, apologetic; whatever was needed to give him peace?

For a year she had known that the time approached when she must give up from sheer fatigue. She had put high hopes in the journey to the mountains, and as soon as they returned, the hopes unfulfilled, she knew that the time had come. For the sake of

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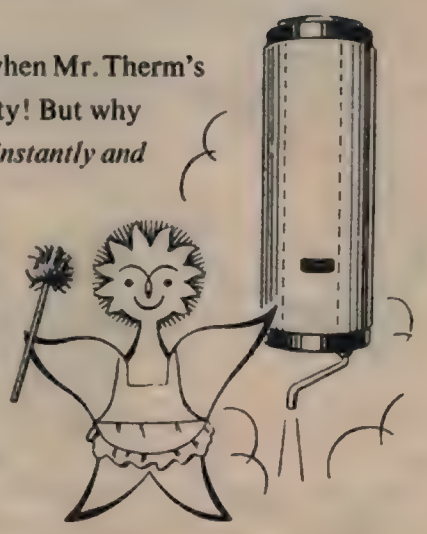

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the children she must now leave him.

But, when she was face to face with him and had looked into his eyes and seen the pale unshadowed depths of them, and taken note of the unlined face and the black hair, grey at the temples, she had said instead: "Come home with us, Peter."

He had nodded, while she touched his cheek, and said: "I will ask for my furlough."

But what, she had thought dispassionately, was the point of his returning to India after a furlough in England? Was it not her duty to take him with her and look after him as best she could, bearing in mind the predominant importance of the children?

She found it hard to think. She was bogged in mud. She was on an unnatural mountain, where it was hard at the bottom and muddy at the top. It would be easier to leave him behind, for he made the mud muddier, the darkness darker.

Then she looked at him, and for a moment the years dropped away, and he was the young man of ice and fire who had lifted her and Gerry, and even Peggy, and a thousand others, towards the heights. In those times he would not have left one of *them*.

She leaned forward, the tears slowly filling her eyes, until her head rested on his knees and her arms were thrown around his body. After a moment she felt his hand on her hair, quietly stroking it. She muttered: "Don't come back to India, Peter. We'll find a way to live somehow."

"All right," he had said. . . .

Now it was six o'clock. All was quiet, and the footsteps in the passage were slow, quiet and heavy. The *chuprasi* entered. He said Peter would like her to come to the office.

In order that she could help him more, Emily had taken a correspondence course in shorthand. She went to the office and saw that Adam Khan was there.

The two men rose as she came in. She greeted Adam and sat down. Peter said: "Take notes, will you, dear? Now, Adam. . . ."

Adam Khan said: "I was going to make some suggestions to Peter about the flood situation, and he thought you'd better be here. Peter, what are your reports?"

Peter said: "About as usual. The Maghra is fourteen points three feet above mean level at Naughat, but——"

Adam said: "And the danger level is nineteen?" Peter nodded. Adam continued: "Have you had any reports from Manohar Singh about the situation at Chhandawal?"

"He reported a week ago that the level of the Harab was normal."

Adam said: "Manohar Singh has been sick for the last *two* weeks, Peter. Our man up there came down today and told us that the Harab is several feet *below* normal level."

She said involuntarily: "Below?"

Adam looked at her and said: "Yes, Emily—below. He thinks there's been a landslide, and the main channel's blocked higher up."

She said: "And you're afraid that when the river comes over the top of the dam, or whatever's blocking it, there might be a flash flood?"

He said: "Yes. There's not much danger up there in Chhandawal, because none of the villages are close to the river, but there would be danger here. The Maghra can't take it. It's rising an inch an hour here now."

Adam leaned forward. "Peter, something's got to be done, now, to prepare Rudwal for a flood in case it comes—and to give us better warning."

"I could send a telegram to Manohar Singh," Peter said. "He ought to send a man up to find if the Harab is blocked or not."

Adam said forcefully: "That's not enough." He checked himself, and Emily's heart twisted as she saw him gaining control over himself and forcing himself to speak gently.

He went on: "We, the local Congress Committee, think you ought to put out a flood warning all along the lower Maghra, especially here in Rudwal. We suggest you call for volunteers to help the police watch the banks. There's a section below the Naughat road bridge where the bank needs strengthening—now."

Peter nodded. "You're right. I'll call a conference tomorrow. The D.S.P. can give us the latest reports."

Adam said carefully: "But tomorrow may be too late. The warnings ought to go out now—immediately."

"That would mean closing a lot of the godowns along River Street," Peter said, "and moving the people out of some of the houses, too."

"Yes," Adam said, "it would."

Peter said: "That's going to cause a lot of disruption. I think we can leave it to the conference tomorrow to decide what should be done."

Adam said, "But——" With a superhuman effort he held down his impatience. "Very well, Peter. Make it early, won't you. And you'll send that telegram right away?"

"I have it ready," Emily broke in. "Sign it here, will you, Peter." He signed it absently.

She said, "I'll see that everyone's notified about the conference."

Adam had opened the door, and she followed him out, calling over her shoulder: "I'll see Adam out, Peter."

Then Adam closed the door and they walked down the passage together.

He said, "I'm going to send out flood warnings right away, on behalf of the Congress Committee. Harnarayan's due back from Lahore this evening, but I don't know whether we dare wait even that long."

They stopped under the port-cochère. It was a heavy, dull evening, and behind her she could hear ayah singing to the children, and the splashings in the bathtub. She wished that Adam would hurry up and go. Peggy and Harry would be arriving at any minute. Emily wanted a little time to compose herself before meeting Peggy.

"Good night, Adam," she said. "I'll make sure everything's seen to right away."

A tonga bell jangled cheerfully at the entrance to the drive, and she saw the tonga lights swing into view. Then it happened. Adam's face began to tilt sideways, and the sound of the tonga wheels on the gravel grew louder and louder.

She was on her knees, her hands supporting her. Adam was rolling down the steps head over heels. There was a rushing, tearing, grinding sound, and a wind shrieked up from nowhere.

I am dying, Emily thought. *I have had a heart attack, I am dying. Oh!* The children's faces sprang into form and she began to crawl towards them, calling, "Peter! Darling!" But a huge formless weight pressed her into the gravel and Adam was there, bleeding from a long cut.

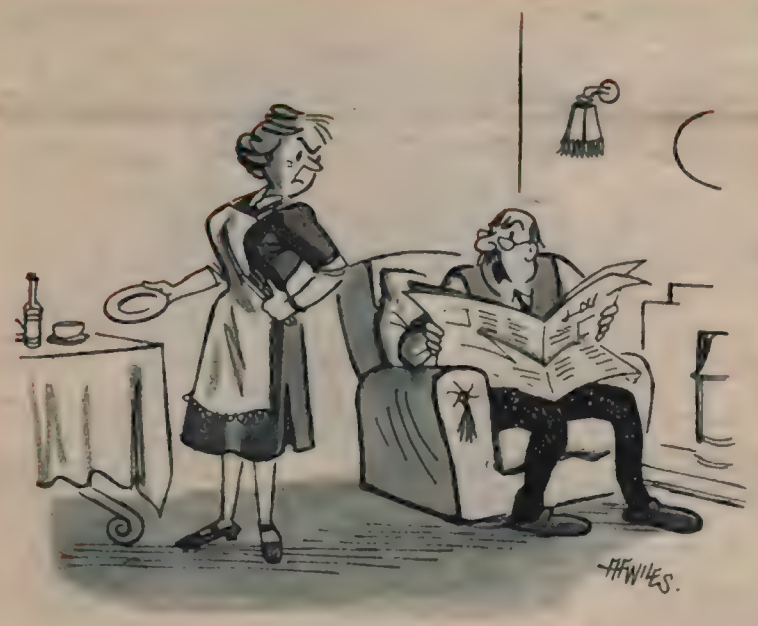
Peggy's voice rose in a shrill low

The Thrush

by DOUGLAS GIBSON

My father and I through a
  London square
Were walking at dusk when he
  suddenly stopped,
Lifting his hand excitedly:
  "Hush!"
And as we listened, the traffic
  dropped
Away into silence, the evening air
Was magical with the song of a
  thrush.

I looked at my father: life's
  troubles and fears
Had gone from his face, his eyes
  shone with joy
At the beautiful April notes of
  that bird,
And I, too, was touched by
  wonder and tears
As I saw how the country heart
  of a boy
Lived in him still after seventy
  years.



"Of course I remember the last time I took you out to dinner. Only I don't get engaged every day"

sound like the howling of a dog: "Harry! Harry! What's happened?"

Emily stood up unsteadily The side of the porte-cochère had collapsed. The tonga lights had gone out, and the lights in the bungalow, and in the city. It was absolutely silent and there was glass under her feet. Then, rising like the wind that had accompanied the earthquake, she heard the slowly gathering sigh of men and women and children crying under the ruins.

Near at hand heavily shod feet pounded towards her. Harry Walsh's voice was yelling: "Steady! Steady!" He was beside her, his face a foot from hers. "Are you hurt?" he said curtly. "Good. Get the children, everyone, out of the building. It'll come again."

Peter came out, nursing his arm. "No one is seriously hurt here," he said. "Now—what's the first thing to be done . . . ?"

By nine o'clock the night sky was flaring with the licking tongues of fires. Emily's children and household were safe. The bungalow had suffered no major damage.

Much had happened. Officials and private citizens had come and gone, or stayed. A dozen families had come to

OPINION—2

The average man believes a thing first, and then searches for proof to bolster his opinion.

Elbert Hubbard

the compound, carrying a few bundles, their children clutched in their arms or running silent and frightened at their knees, and now squatted in huddled groups under the wall or along the veranda.

Five people were gathered in the drawing-room—Peter, Adam Khan, Smythe, the District Superintendent of Police, Harry, and Peggy. Smythe's tunic was smeared with blood, but no one had time or interest to ask him whose blood it was.

"Looting's going to be a problem later," Smythe said. He was a short man with a cropped ginger moustache and ginger hair. "My chaps have so much else to do. I'd like three or four hundred Gurkhas from Manali to help with street cordons and the rest of it—more, if we can get them."

"Have you been able to make any guess at the number of casualties yet?" Adam Khan asked.

"About ten thousand dead," Smythe said bluntly, "mostly in the Gujarabad sector. Everyone who can is running away from it now, but in the morning they'll start coming back to rescue Granny and dig up the gold mohurs from under the floor. We'll have to cordon the whole sector off while we search the ruins. We ought to ask for those soldiers at once, Peter. The telegraph's open to Manali. They know we've had a quake."

"We're not through to Lahore, though?" Peter said.

"No," Smythe said, impatiently brushing his hand up under his moustache. "But we don't need to ask H.E.'s permission to call on the army now. I'll sign the message if you like." His look was contemptuous.

Emily told herself that she hated him for his insensitiveness, his coarse skin and manner, and his taking advantage of Peter. But it was not true. She sympathized with him.

"Well, can I?" he repeated harshly.

"If you think you'll need them. . . . Yes," Peter said.

"Good. I'm going down to the *kutcherry* now. You'll find me there if you want me." He walked out, swinging his swagger cane. Outside, a constable handed him a shotgun.

Emily could not bear to look at Peter sitting there alone in the middle of the big sofa, and stole a glance at Harry and Peggy. Harry's face was without expression; only his eyes moved restlessly, like a bird's. Peggy was beautiful, calm and smooth. Smythe had hardly taken his eyes off her; and Peggy had not taken her eyes off Peter. She sat on a chair in sensuous, drowsy satisfaction, a woman fulfilled.

Now she spoke: "Peter, why don't you get Harry to put each member of the Maru expedition in charge of a gang of volunteers and set them to rescue work? Most of them were officers in the war and have some sort of experience that would be useful."

Peter nodded. "That's a good idea, Peggy. What do you say, Harry?"

"Yes," Harry said, the word tight and bitten off. "They'll all be working on a house that fell down right next to the *dâk* bungalow. Where shall I bring them?"

Peter appeared to be thinking. Emily said: "The *kutcherry* would be best, Peter. It's on the edge of the Gujarabad sector."

Peter said: "All right. As soon as you can, Harry."

Harry and Peggy rose to their feet. Peggy came over to Emily. "Can't we start a tea and soup kitchen or something, Emily, at the *kutcherry* for the people who are working?"

"Yes," she said. "Speak to my cook, and get the *khansamar* down from the *dâk* bungalow with all the stores he has. There's a shop close to the *kutcherry* which we can raid, and get tea and sugar at least. I'll be down in an hour." She knew she ought to go at once, but she dared not leave Peter; Peggy knew that.

Emily heard sandalled feet slapping

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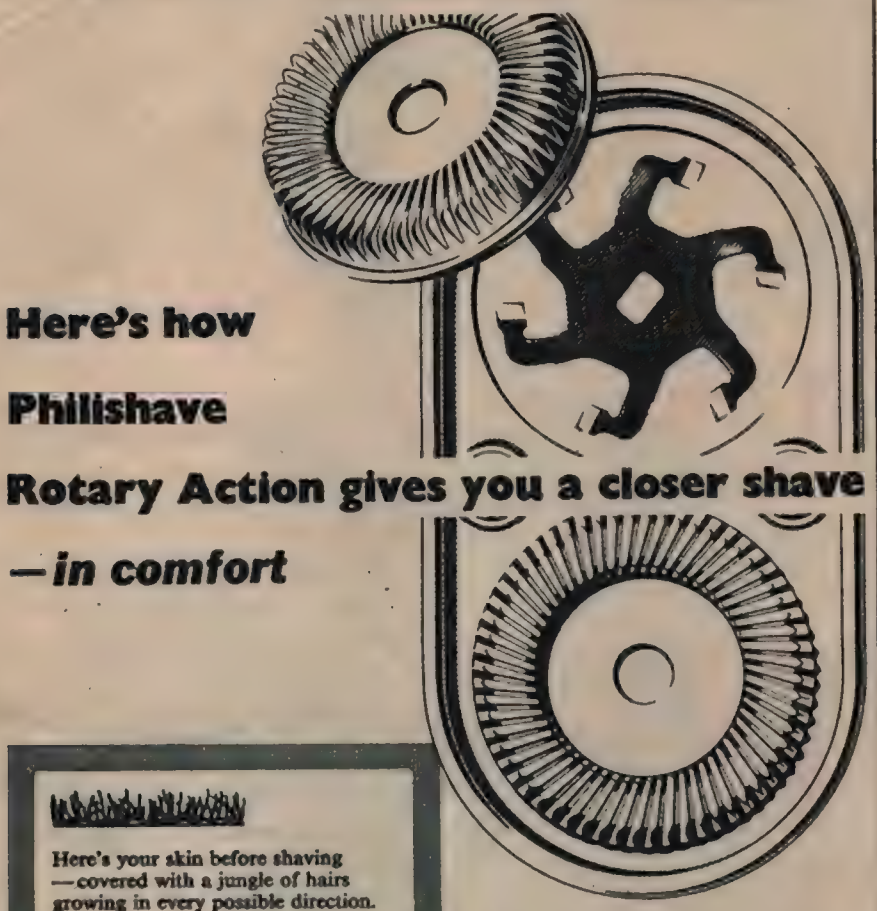

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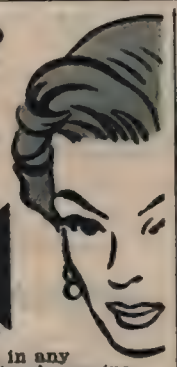

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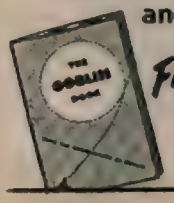

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down the veranda towards the windows. The three of them turned as a thin, tall man with an ascetic face entered the room.

"Harnarayan!" Adam said. "Thank heaven you got here."

"We were only five miles out when the shock came," the man said. "The driver refused to go on, so I walked. Good evening, Mr. Savage. Good evening, ma'am."

"Can I give you something to eat?" Emily said. "Some tea?"

"No, thank you, ma'am. I came only to find Adam. I was told he was here. Will you come along now, Adam? We have something urgent to discuss."

"I have called the committee to meet in the room above Gupta's store," Adam said. "We're going to organize a refugee camp, on the old cavalry *maidan*."

"I'm afraid that will be impossible," Harnarayan said formally.

Adam said: "It is not impossible. We can't do everything, but we can provide a framework. Otherwise there'd be no leaders and everything will take much longer."

"Exactly," Harnarayan said harshly. "Why should we get the British out of trouble? They suppress us, and then when they need us they think they can call on us and we'll help."

Peter said nothing. Emily blurted: "Thousands of people—Indians—are dead, Mr. Harnarayan. More are dying every minute. Besides, isn't this a chance for you to show that you can organize help as well as resistance?"

Harnarayan said: "Possibly, madam, but we prefer to let the people see for themselves how thoroughly bad and helpless your government is, even mechanically. That way will they realize their own strength."

Adam said: "I can't believe you mean what you say, Haru. Look." He pointed out of the windows. "Our people are dying, they're trapped in the houses. Those who got out have no food, no shelter."

"Individually any member of the Congress may do what he wishes," Harnarayan said. "As a party we will not raise a finger to help the British. We are not going to co-operate in anything with the British oppressors."

Emily thought Peter ought to have Harnarayan arrested at once. That would leave Adam a free hand to persuade his committee to do what they should.

Adam must have guessed her thoughts, for he said: "It won't do any good to arrest him—in the long run. This is something we must argue out among ourselves. Come on, Haru."

"Very well," Harnarayan said. "But you will lose. The committee will do what I tell them."

"We'll see," Adam said. "I'll meet you at the *kutcherry* in about an hour, Peter. Don't forget about the floods." He followed Harnarayan out of the room and she was alone with the man on the sofa, Mr. Peter Savage, D.S.O., I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of the Rudwal District of the Punjab.

An hour later, with Emily riding at Peter's side, they reached the *kutcherry*. A few of the offices in this ugly quadrangle had crumbled, but as a whole the group still stood.

Peggy was there already with a tent erected. Harry stood beside Peggy. When Emily came close enough, she saw that his face was set, emotionless, and deliberately unanxious. Gerry used to look like that when Peter was leading towards some height that Gerry feared he was incapable of surmounting. It was panic, transmuted by a lifetime of training into something that was the opposite of panic—a control so tight that a sudden, unexpected blow would shatter it.

The minutes, and then the hours, passed unheeded. Peter went off to make a personal inspection of the police cordon round the Gujarabad.

A night-watchman came and reported that the Maghra was rising at the same rate; Emily sent him off to find Peter. The members of the Maru expedition took groups of Indians and disappeared into the smoking alleys of the city.

Adam Khan emerged, tight-lipped, from Gupta's shop and told her that the Congress party was not going to run the camp; but he personally would —with volunteers, many of them Congress men.

Smythe returned and told her Peter was having a look at the river. After an hour Smythe muttered: "He ought to be back by now. It's not my bloody job to make these decisions. I've got my own work to do."

She said nothing; Peter *ought* to be back. Someone else made the decisions—either herself or Smythe or Harry and, most of all, Peggy. Peggy was smooth and exultant. Her every word and action gloated over Emily.

Harry returned and Emily gave him hot tea in a tin bowl. He was dyed with soot now and his hands had been badly scorched. He said: "I came to climb Maru—sun, snow, ice, nothing changed, not just since I saw it last, but ever. *This!* It's just like France." He drank again. "I've never seen a real city in rubble, though."

Everyone was a hero, except Peter, that night. As the dawn came up, Emily could see for the first time the

OPINION—3

As soon as you can say what you think, and not what some other person has thought for you, you are on the way to being a remarkable man.

J. M. Barrie

extent of the destruction. Flames suddenly spurted from a three-storey house only twenty yards down the street, on the opposite side.

She turned to Harry, but he was already moving, with a dozen Indians hurrying after him.

"Look at Harry," Peggy cried, her voice exultant. "Look at him."

The men had run into the front door of the building and, a few seconds later, came tumbling out again as though they had met a tiger. A gout of fire and a torrent of black smoke followed them out, and no further explanation was needed. It was an old house, heavily ornamented in the Hindu style, and already Harry was going up the façade, a rope trailing from his waist.

"Look at Harry," Peggy said. "Look at him, Emily."

Up he went, easily and quickly and into a second-storey window. A moment later she saw him again as he helped an old man to get a grip on the rope. The old man slid down. A wailing woman followed. Finally Harry scrambled out and began to slide down, using one hand and his legs on the rope and holding a large, shapeless bundle over his shoulder with his free hand. The building swayed slowly forward.

Peggy screamed: "Oh, quick, quick, Harry, quick!" But no one could hear down there for the roar of the building and the rumble of the flames now pouring out of the lower windows and the door. Harry reached the ground.

"Run!" Peggy shrieked.

In the cleared place Harry ran with the bundle. Beyond, silhouetted against a sudden brilliance of the sun, the spectators stood frozen, and one of them was kneeling with a black box camera held in front of his face.

The bundle slipped from Harry's shoulder and fell heavily. For a fraction of a second he hesitated, half-turning to stoop and pick it up. Then he ran on, alone. The high, many-windowed wall, embellished with gods and demons, leaned out over him, breaking like a wave of ocean above him.

The bundle rolled, stood, and was revealed as a young girl, her face split

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by a cry of terror. She took one limping step and then stood frozen, while Harry ran. The house fell and engulfed the girl, and a great cloud of dust, lit by flames and smoke, licked at Harry's heels and hid the crowd beyond and the man with the camera.

Emily turned away, feeling sick. "I've got to find Peter," she mumbled. She began to run. Their groom was beside her in a moment. Yes, yes, the horse! She scrambled into the saddle. Peter had gone away to hide from all the decisions. Where? She'd try the bungalow first. . . .

He was there, on the sofa, staring out at his city and the sunshine and shadow that swept slowly across it. It was strange that no one had thought to come here to find him.

She went to him and said: "Peter, you've got to come down to the *kutcherry*—at once."

He stood up and she prayed that she would feel a wave of anger, terror, even hate, come out against her. But there was nothing, only the limpid reasonableness of the past four years.

She said: "It's Harry."

"Oh," he said. "Is he hurt?"

"No," she said. "He was rescuing a girl from a building. It fell down and he left her so that he could run away faster to save himself. Purshottam Dass took a photograph of it."

Purshottam Dass was the local correspondent of the *Patriot*, a nationalist newspaper published in virulent English in Lahore. He was also Harnarayan's right-hand man in the extremist wing of the local Congress group.

"Harry—ran away to save himself," Peter said slowly. "I don't believe it."

"It's true," she said, her voice rising. "Just as true as that you're sitting here, doing nothing, when Rudwal needs you more than it ever did or ever will."

"Did Peggy see?" he asked.

"Yes. Everything. She had just been telling me to watch because he was so brave—and asking where you were, in the same breath."

The *chuprasi* stumbled in. "M-memsahib," he stammered, "the watchman at the river says it is beginning to rise fast. It will be over the bund in four hours."

She said: "The Harab dam, whatever it was. It must have broken."

Peter said: "That will flood the whole of the Gujarabad sector to about three feet."

She said: "The last time I saw Smythe he thought there were about a thousand injured people, living, trapped in the debris down there. We couldn't get a quarter of them out in time. Oh, Peter, what can we do?"

"Harry," he muttered. "Oh, my God! I'll come down. Harry can help. That's it. Harry can do it. Quick—get that horse. We'll go down on it together."

THE fallen house now blocked the street beyond the *kutcherry*, toward the Gujarabad sector. The tent where they had made tea stood alone and, alone in it, were Harry and Peggy.

Peter reined in and Emily slid down. Peter walked up to Harry. "Harry, do you know anything about explosives?"

Harry said: "A little."

Peter said: "I want you to go to Shamoli, Harry. It's a mile upstream, on the other bank. There is an old bed of the Maghra there. Shamoli stands in it. I want the bank blown in, so that the Maghra flows down its old course. Take the explosives out of the stores, and all your men, and get to Shamoli. See that it's done."

Harry said: "I can't do that."

Peter said: "Why?"

Harry said: "I lost my nerve just now. I killed a girl. No one will listen to me."

"Has anyone said anything to you about it?" Peter asked, lighting a cheroot.

"Oh, hurry, hurry," Emily whispered. "Hurry"—for the fires crackled and the city lay at the door of death, and the silent river climbed out of its bed.

Harry said: "No, they are all pretending it didn't happen. They feel sorry for me. But I know what they're really thinking, because I'm thinking it myself."

Peter said: "That's done, Harry. There are a thousand lives to save now. Go on."

Harry still waited, his mouth a little open. Peggy said: "He can't go, Peter, can't you see? He can't. He's afraid it'll happen again."

Peter said: "He must and it won't. Go on, Harry."

Now it was there in his voice and eye, force from the past. He did not speak loudly, but he never had; his eyes were the colour of icebergs, as they had always been, but not cold now; and all the power came together to focus on his friend. As though electrical wires had been connected inside him, Harry turned and hurried away.

Adam Khan arrived on a country pony. "Peter," he said, "we're absolutely full up on the *maidan*. I'm sending everyone I can out into the country."

Peter said: "All right."

Adam said: "I heard about Harry. Harnarayan has already sent Purshottam Dass to Lahore with that photograph, among others. I couldn't prevent him."

Peter said: "No. I've sent Harry to Shamoli."

"What for?"

"To blow down the bund there and put the Maghra in the old bed."

Adam's weary eyes lit up and he said: "Great heaven! That's a stroke of genius. Who thought of that?"

Emily said: "Peter did."

Adam said: "Wonderful! If it can be done in time you'll save the Gujarabad sector and everyone in it."

"It will help Harry," Peter said.

The street was full of people, and Emily realized dully that it had been so all night and all morning—people moving, dragging, dying, eating. There was an incredible litter of blankets, boxes, sacks, beds, scraps of food, firewood, carts, and everywhere the gleam of cooking-pots.

"I'll be getting back," Adam said. "About half the Congress people here are working with me. A hundred and fifty others came to help during the night. . . ."

A brown stain rose slowly into the sky above the city, wide and low-spread over the houses to the east. Dully Emily watched. Adam jerked to a stop in mid-stride. A heavy shudder shook the earth and rattled the skeletal walls of the house across the street. Adam was shouting an urgent question, but nothing could be heard under the continuing roar of the explosion.

Peter grabbed her elbow and said exultantly: "Harry's done it."

Smythe came scrambling down the street towards them. "Everyone who can be moved is out of the Gujarabad sector," he said. "We haven't been able to check properly into all the fallen houses, but we counted seven hundred and sixty people alive, trapped in the houses. About half of them are going to die anyway—injuries, shock. Was that the Shamoli bund going?"

"I think so," Peter said.

Smythe said: "It'll back up later on. The old course is silted right up about twelve miles down, remember? They've been growing crops on it for thirty years."

Peter said: "Yes, but it'll give us at least another twenty-four hours to dig in the Gujarabad sector."

"The water's in to a few inches now," Smythe said, "and it was coming up fast when I left. That was before the bund went, of course." He glanced round and lowered his voice. "Did you hear about Walsh?"

"Yes," Peter said abruptly. "And I don't want you to mention it to anyone, or let it slip into your conversation."

Smythe exploded. "My God, Peter, tomorrow it's going to be all over the front page of the *Patriot* and every vernacular paper in India. We can't pretend it didn't happen."

"We can pretend it wasn't Harry Walsh that did it," Peter said, "because it wasn't. It was what's left of him after France. *You* weren't in France." He looked grimly at the red-faced policeman.

Smythe mumbled: "All right."

Peter said: "As soon as he comes back I'm going to send him down to work with you in the Gujarabad sector. See that he's put in charge of something, without supervision."

"Right," Smythe said. "I'm off. By the way, we've shot nine looters so far. That's pretty good, that there have been so few, considering."

EMILY sat down again, her head rocking dully from right to left, then forward and back. The sun had gone and it was grey, damp and hot. Her head ached with a slow, throbbing rhythm. She thought it was going to rain, and she thought it would not be enough to put out the remaining fires. What would happen to the people in the open fields? Were her children all right? Who was looking after them . . . ?

She awoke with a start. She was lying on the ground against the wall and someone had put a rolled blanket under her head. She heard strange voices and saw Gurkha soldiers and officers. The Commissioner was there, a little apart, talking with Peter. Harry Walsh was there. Peggy had returned, her face bloodless.

Peter turned to Harry. "Are you feeling up to it?"

Harry muttered: "Yes, I'm not tired."

The Commissioner said: "You look it."

"I'm not," Harry repeated.

Peggy broke in. "Where are you sending him now?"

Peter said: "There's a big fire in the Hardial sector. It's been smouldering all day, but now it's beginning to spread."

"You can't send him to a fire," Peggy said, her voice high and brittle.

"I must," Peter said. "He's the only man who can do it."

Peggy turned to the Commissioner and said: "Don't let him go. Haven't you heard? He——"

Peter drew back his arm and with an effortless gesture struck his open hand across her face, so hard that she sprawled back, staggered, slipped and fell.

"Peter!" Emily cried, aghast, stooping to help Peggy to her feet.

"Get a move on, Harry," Peter said. "There's no human life involved, so I don't want you to allow any unnecessary risks. The buildings were cleared hours ago. Just get the fire out and, if you can't, demolish the houses around it so that it won't spread."

Peggy leaned like a sack against Emily, whispering: "Oh, God! Oh, God!"

"Come away," Emily whispered. "I'll look after you. Come on."

She put her arms under Peggy's elbows and half lifted, half dragged her along the street, past the corpses and the carts slowly loading there, over the rubble and towards the bungalow.

To be concluded next week

MY BROTHER Malcolm

OUR father devoted much of his spare time to politics. During the evenings, there were often politicians debating in our crowded living-room. Malcolm was fascinated by these discussions and spent hours sitting on a divan in a corner, listening and hoping that he would not be noticed. Once he was so carried away that he came out with a loud comment of his own. There was an immediate silence and a raising of eyebrows, and he was rushed off to bed.

At father's open air political meetings, Malcolm appointed himself chief opponent to the many hecklers. It was astonishing to hear this small, ferocious boy of twelve arguing fiercely with a man twice his size and four times his age. Usually he was ignored but, being exceptionally well-informed for a schoolboy, he often managed to hold the attention of the heckler long enough to get the better of the exchanges.

Once Malcolm had made up his mind to do something, nothing would stand in his way. On one occasion Father received an invitation to a dinner party in London in honour of G. K. Chesterton. Malcolm, still a young schoolboy, was determined to attend this function. On some pretext or other he accompanied Father to London and managed to stay with him throughout the afternoon.

Outside the restaurant, Father said goodbye and turned to walk in. Malcolm calmly followed. There was great consternation when the pr sence of this youthful guest was discovered, but in the end he was allowed to stay—and was even presented with a box of preserved fruits to mark the occasion.

As a family, we were very keen on amateur theatricals. Once, for a production of *Julius Caesar*, Malcolm arranged a complicated trapdoor system for the entry of the ghost, which he was playing. This involved crawling under the improvised platform, lying flat on his stomach until he heard his cue and then slowly emerging through the boards.

Unfortunately, he could not hear and, guessing wrongly, managed to miscalculate the timing of his entrance no fewer than four times. Each time it seemed to take him longer to disappear back through his trapdoor, and the tragedy quickly developed into a comedy.

Malcolm was passionately fond of reading. We were made to take family walks on Sunday afternoons, but Malcolm thought this a great waste of reading time. He therefore gradually developed mysterious pains in his legs which seemed to get worse at weekends and provided an excuse to stay at home.

He fooled Father for months in this way until one afternoon Father forgot his stick and had to return for it. He found my young brother, supposedly in pain, balanced on two chairs, trying to reach books from the top shelf in the library. Malcolm was so surprised to see Father that he toppled off the chairs and really did hurt his leg.

WHO IS THIS FAMOUS BROTHER? See page 39

Island of birds

Continued from page 13

ornithological people in London to send him a rota of watchers so they could keep a night-and-day guard on the birds.

The cottage was really only a wildfowler's hut. Like the heron of these marshes, it stood on long legs in wet ground, and he ran up its steps.

He was a man living alone, but the hut was neat as a pin. Canned gas gave him light and warmth. There was a foam rubber mattress on the bunk.

He got through to London. Yes, help to guard birds and nest, if there should be one, would be sent immediately.

Then he read up about great egrets. They were shy birds, very wary, normally breeding in Siberia, Persia, Syria, sometimes in trees but more usually among reeds in colonies of their own, or near other herons. They inhabited marshes, creeks and deltas, and fed on much the same things as ordinary herons do, from fish and frogs to water insects, worms and voles, so there was no reason why they should not stay.

There were instances of their occurrence in East Anglia, some open to doubt, but the bird had never bred in Britain. This would be the very first occasion.

Pete recalled that there had been a time when the bittern was extinct in Britain, and that now it was re-established near here as an almost common bird. In the past, spoonbills nested here.

There had been days when bee-eaters and stilts bred here for the very first time, when the avocet returned. Perhaps these new rare visitors would establish themselves also as a part of British wild life.

Pete bolted some tea and bacon, and dashed back out.

The birds were still there and by next day they had chosen the site for the nest. It was at the edge of the heronry among rushes, in water three or four feet deep. Here they constructed a pile of dead reeds which, when finished, stood up a yard or so out of the water, and presently there appeared in the nest four pale blue eggs.

Many dangers threatened the splendid white birds. In spite of the twenty-four hour guard now being kept on the island, they might be frightened away and desert. They might visit Simpson's land, in some spot where he could shoot them unobserved. The eggs could be discovered by stoat, jay, magpie, rat or boy. Flood could reach them.

When Pete thought of all the different things that might happen to them, in spite of all the efforts of himself and his helpers, it did not seem possible that they could survive for long.

Now and then he would see Simpson in the distance, going about with gun and dog as usual. If the old man had not been a landowner, he would have been a gamekeeper. He was that shape and he wore a gun as Pete wore field-glasses.

Daily he plodded round on whatever course he happened to have set himself, never hurrying but always reaching what he had in mind, no matter what obstacles of tide or weather stood between him and it. There'd be a cold pipe in his teeth, like as not, and who knows what thoughts inside that walnut skull, behind the furious grey eyebrows.

Often he would stand and gaze at the white herons. . . .

Presently news of the birds got into the papers, and sightseers began to arrive. After all, this land belonged to the nation, so now the people came to see their new white birds.

They could watch through field-glasses from the mainland; and they were brought over by Pete's rota helpers to the island itself in escorted parties that were kept small enough and far enough away not to alarm the birds. The public thus rightly shared the interest that they had helped to create.

But the breakfast picnic fire of one of them brought disaster.

It was May now and, as it happened, very dry. Live fragments of this early morning fire on the mainland were blown across the dyke and fell in inaccessible rushes. In a moment reeds and grass throughout the sanctuary were ablaze. Pete was in bed at the time, having just completed a night shift, but he phoned the fire brigade and was dressed and out five minutes after being called, loping towards the heronry.

Already gusts of heat were meeting his face and soon he could hear the snap and crackle of the flames as they ran through reeds. Even the air smelled charred.

It was low tide and people from the mainland were already streaming across to help. Pete put one of his rota watchers in charge, to organize the helpers and distribute the birch brooms kept always ready for this emergency.

He himself plunged straight on into the smokescreen towards that nest in the reeds. There was water all round it. Perhaps it was still possible to save it.

Soon he was coughing and his eyes were smarting. He had to stop and soak his handkerchief in a mud pool and tie it across his face. Then he ran on.

Suddenly mole-black water gleamed at his feet. The nest of the white herons was the other side of this mere. He knew pretty well how much water there was here—probably waist deep—so he dragged his gum boots off and waded in.

All round even the reeds that stood in the water were on fire, and the flames were running before the wind. Pete could smell his clothes scorching and splashed himself and floundered on through the sucking mud and the mud-holes that tried to drag him down. Indeed, he might well get stuck here and be roasted where he stood.

He reached the nest. It loomed up in the smoke, a bulky pile taller than himself, and smoke had driven off the sitting bird. But the nest itself was not yet alight and above the smoke-pall he could hear herons calling.

He soused the nest. He turned to make his way back, and stopped. The heat was too great and it was increasing. It would bake the eggs. They must be got out and kept warm and put back later, with the hope that the birds would not desert the nest as a result.

He drew himself up carefully on the nest, taking care not to sink it as he did so.

It was empty. The eggs had disappeared.

Of course he knew immediately who had had them, under cover of the smoke. No hazard of fire or mud would have held the old man off. Pete turned in a passion to get back and deal with him.

On the bank again, he had a struggle to pull his gum boots back on, because his feet were wet.

Seeking his victim, he raged towards the general crowd of fire-fighters and rubbernecks. He called out: "Anyone seen Simpson?"

But the old man was not to be found. Pete even went to his house to demand the eggs back, but there was no one at home.

He returned. By then the fire-fighters had finished putting out the blaze. Of course it would have to be watched for two or three days, because it had probably gone underground and might burst out again, but the worst was over.

Pete lifted field-glasses to survey the damage. Many young birds had perished in the conflagration and many nests were lost. There had been severe individual suffering, but those and other species would re-establish themselves. The egrets? He could not see them.

But there was someone by their nest. Waist deep in the cold water stood Simpson. So it wasn't he, after all, who'd had the eggs.

Ah, thought Pete with pleasurable malice, *you're too late, old boy. Someone else was before us both.*

But then he got the shock of his life, for Simpson was taking four pale blue eggs out of his shirt, next his skin. He was rubbing them in bird-dirt so the parent birds wouldn't smell his touch, and he was putting them back into the nest.

Pete went to meet him as he returned and climbed out of the mere. Water was running out of Simpson's clothes. The old man was burned and bleeding. Behind him a white bird wavered down to the nest and examined it and presently arranged itself on the eggs again.

"Mr. Simpson——"

"You think you're the only one interested in wild birds, don't you?" replied Simpson, nasty-nice. "Well, let me tell you, Oliver, there's a lot would not be known about birds but for us who shoot them." He squeezed his coat to get the water out. "My time'll come another year for these," he added. "When there's more about."

"You're cold and hurt," cried Pete, getting his voice back.

"There's nothing the matter with me. I never feel cold, thank you."

"Your hand——"

"Now you keep your side of the dyke," advised the old man, "and I'll keep mine, and there'll be room for us both in the world, I dare say." He moved off, holding one hand with the other.

Next week the white herons hatched off, and presently the young birds flew. . . .

When the time came for them to leave the country, they were watched from both sides of the dyke, by deep old brown eyes and by keen blue ones, too.

The white birds rose like a flight of angels, circling higher and higher, till the sun lit their bellies. They turned east and disappeared into the mauve mist over the sea.

Whether they would come back another year, no one knew, nor why two men should have risked their lives so that they might. After all, what did it matter if these birds established themselves here or not? What did it matter if new or rare species failed or succeeded?

Pete tried to figure it out, but all he came to was that he was on the side of life against death, of trees against bricks. He, who had been injured, knew this much but no more.

"So why it's important I've no idea," he said out loud. "I only know it *is*."

THE END

STRANGE TALES OF THE SEA · 13

by Commander Douglas Duff

The island of violent death

OFF the Skeleton Coast of south-west Africa lies Ichaboe, a barren rock on which the huge rollers of the South Atlantic burst in eternal surf and thunder. It is coated with a seventy-foot thick deposit of guano—the droppings of myriads of birds through countless centuries—which is prized as a fertilizer.

On Ichaboe there are more than four hundred graves of men and women, mainly Europeans and Americans. Not one of them died from natural causes. All perished from violence, murder, accident or by taking their own lives.

Greed, fear, treachery and murderous hatreds and intrigues have haunted Ichaboe ever since Captain Hiram K. Williams discovered its riches of precious fertilizer, loaded his sealer, the Betty Williams, with it and carried it to Boston.

There he was foolish enough to betray the source of his unexpected riches and, within a year, more than two hundred ships, bearing the flags of every maritime nation in the world, rushed to Ichaboe to fill their holds.

During the first twelve months, 135 men died in quarrels among the crews of ships rolling in the giant swell off the dangerous coast.

Worse came when William Tomlinson, mate of a Bristol ship, found a Spanish treasure-chest stuffed with doubloons, plate and jewels at the bottom of a nine-foot pit in the guano he was working.

As soon as the find became known Ichaboe swarmed with treasure-hunters of the toughest kind. Eighty-five of them died during the next few weeks, most of them killed in the fights which broke out.

Among them was Frau Mohler, wife of Captain Hans Mohler, skipper of a German ship, who went ashore with her husband and six of his seamen and found a cache of diamonds. She and her shipmates never returned—they were buried in a common grave.

But the grisliest chapter in all Ichaboe's terrible history came when Barnabas Wilson, the skipper of an American tramp, noticed, while he was digging the guano, that the corpses which he disinterred were all mummified.

He took away four dozen, rigged them out with some cheap but genuine scraps of Egyptian antiquities, and then set out to sell them as "Genuine Egyptian mummies from the Nubian Desert."

It was a profitable trade. An Englishman in Naples paid him £1,000 for one.

The South African Government keeps an eye on Ichaboe, for not only is its guano still valuable, but sometimes large and fine diamonds are washed into its crevices after great Atlantic storms. Few trespassers reach the Isle of Violent Death nowadays.

Then, too, doctors are interested in Ichaboe, for it has the strange property of preventing infections from spreading. No one has yet died a natural death from any illness contracted on this strangest island of the oceans.

The people next door

Continued from page 10

up, and Mrs. Buskin was left looking helpless.

Paul took the earpiece from her and put it back on the hook. "You see, it's quite easy," he said. "I've written down the number for you."

Mrs. Buskin took the piece of paper and put it in her apron pocket, sure in her mind that she would never use "that contraption" again.

Soon afterwards the four-wheeler arrived to take Rose and Paul to the station. Mrs. Buskin saw them off with an almost maternal air, then turned back into the house. It seemed strangely empty with Rose gone. . . .

Late that night, Mrs. Buskin and Mabel sat by the kitchen stove gossiping over their final cup of cocoa. Mrs. Buskin had been telling stories of her youth, of how, at twelve years of age, she had gone to her first place as scullery maid. The wages were six pounds a year. On her first night, a frightened child, she had crept to bed crying for her mother. Then, at fifteen, she had acquired her first post as kitchen maid at twelve pounds a year. Gradually she had learned her trade, working for and watching the enormous woman who was cook.

The clock in the hall struck one.

"One o'clock! Well I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Buskin. "Go to bed quick, Mabel. We'll wash up those cups in the morning. I'll be up in a jiffy, when I've raked out the fire."

Mabel went up the back stairs and Mrs. Buskin took the big poker from beside the stove. She started to rake between the bars of the grate. As she did so she heard a faint scratching sound in the scullery. *Some dratted rat,* she thought.

Leaving the poker in the fire, she went into the scullery. Then she stood transfixed with astonishment and fear. By the light from the kitchen she saw that a hole had been cut through the back door just above the lock, and that a hand was pushing through.

For a fraction of a second she stood, her mouth open, and then she turned. Like many stout people, she could move lightly and quickly. She seized the now red-hot poker from the fire and darted back.

The hand was right through now, groping for the key. Mrs. Buskin struck, thrusting the poker into the searching hand. There was a terrible scream and the hand tried to pull back. For an awful moment it struggled with a sort of frenzied life of its own, the fingers twisting and weaving. Then it disappeared.

Mrs. Buskin dropped the poker on the stone floor. There was the sound of footsteps racing down the drive, and a sobbing moan. She staggered to a chair and covered her face with her apron, rocking backwards and forwards.

Mabel came into the kitchen. "Mrs. Buskin! What was that scream? It sounded like a man. What's happened?"

"I'm in the scullery." Mrs. Buskin took the apron from her face. "He's burned his hand."

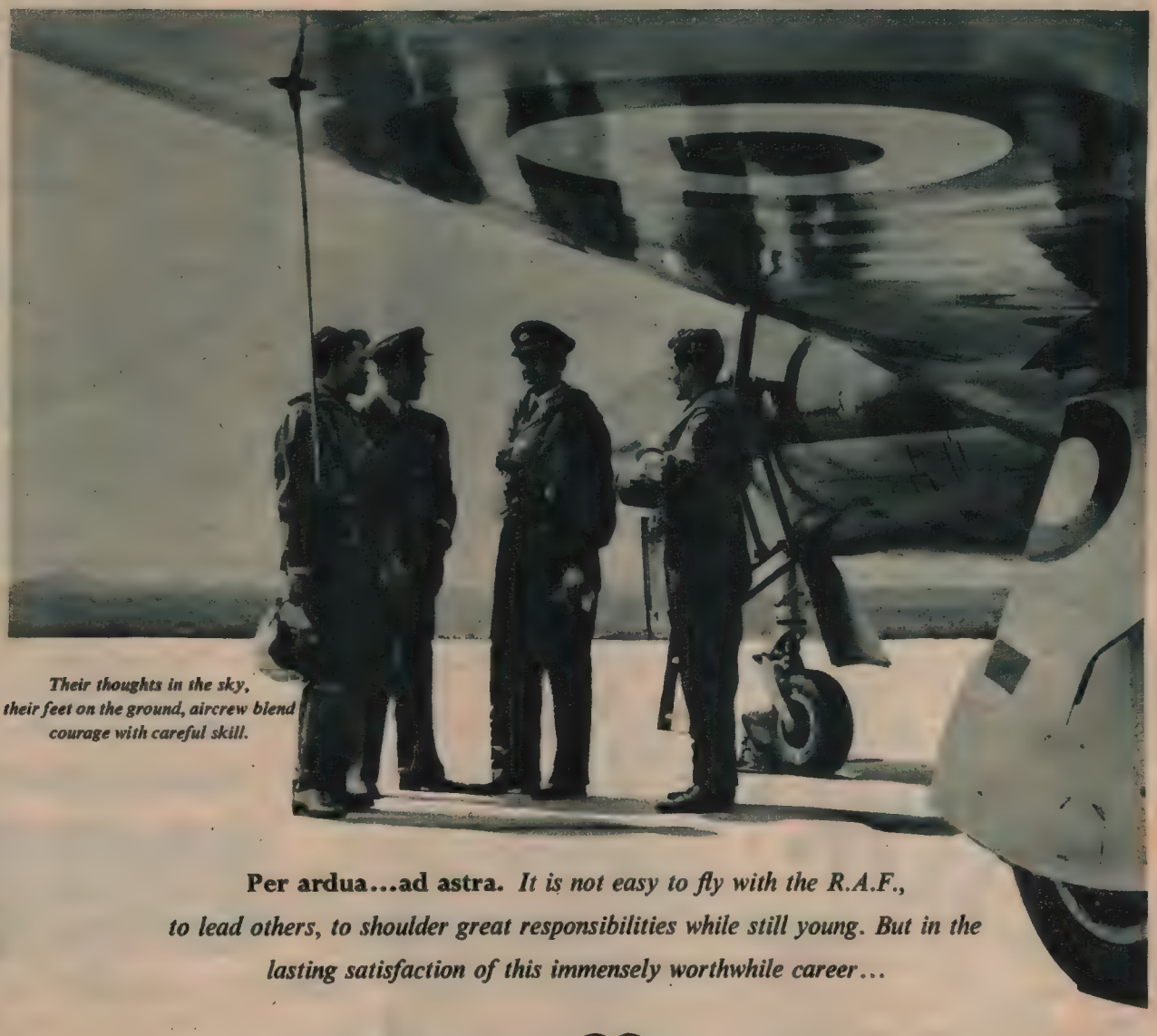
"Who? How do you know he's burned his hand?"

"Because I burned it," answered

MY BROTHER MALCOLM

See page 37

Malcolm Muggeridge, the broadcaster and editor, is the famous brother of Colonel Harry Douglas Muggeridge



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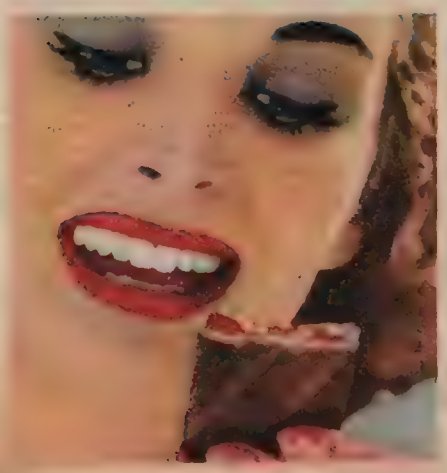

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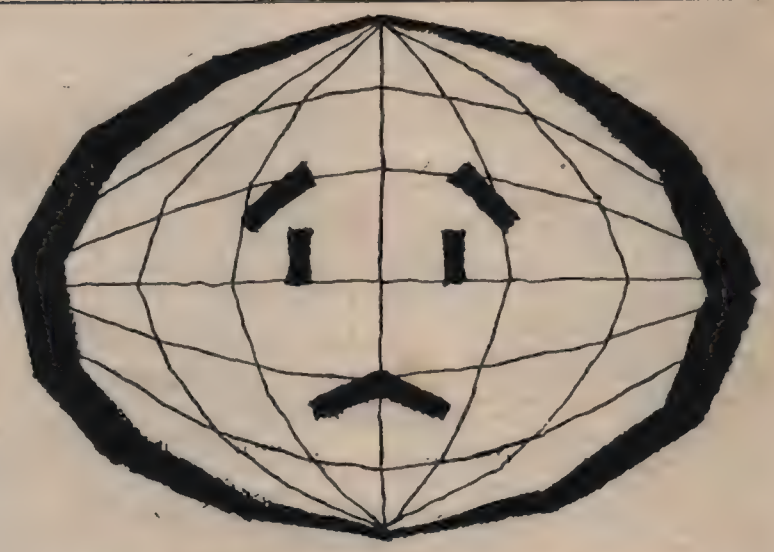

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Mrs. Buskin. "Look at the back door."

Mabel turned and saw the hole in the door and the poker on the floor.

"Gawd," she whispered.

"Don't blaspheme in my kitchen," said Mrs. Buskin mechanically. She got to her feet. "You stay and watch that door. I must ring up Mrs. Foster."

Her legs trembled as she went into the hall. She lifted the receiver, gave the number in a quavering voice, and waited, breathing hard.

"Who is it? What do you want?" Mrs. Foster's usually gentle voice sounded almost rough.

"It's me, ma'am," Mrs. Buskin gasped. "Mrs. Buskin, ma'am. Could Mr. Foster come over? Something's happened here. Something awful!"

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Buskin," came Mrs. Foster's voice. "Mr. Foster can't possibly come over. He's had a terrible accident, you see. He's burned his hand. Burned it very badly. I must go to him now."

The telephone went dead. Mrs. Buskin hung up the receiver. Burned his hand at one o'clock in the morning? Two men with burned hands? Her thoughts raced.

Slowly she went back to the kitchen. Mabel stood stiff as a sentry, watching the door.

"Is he coming?" she asked.

"No. He's burned his hand."

"Oh—the poor gentleman." Mabel's face was full of guileless sympathy.

"Mabel! He's burned his hand. Burned it bad. At one o'clock in the morning, same as the other."

Mabel stared at her. The look of sympathy slowly changed to bewilderment, then horror.

"Gawd," she whispered, this time unreproved. "No, Mrs. Buskin, you don't mean it. Not our Mr. Foster. You can't mean it. You can't!"

"I don't mean nothing yet," Mrs. Buskin said heavily. She looked vaguely round her and then went on: "We'll have to sit up all night. We can't leave that door. Shut the door to the scullery and put the kettle on. We'll have a cup of tea."

She sat down, while Mabel got the tea. As she drank it, hot and sweet, she felt better.

"Are you going to tell the police?" asked Mabel.

Mrs. Buskin shook her head. "No. I shan't say nothing to nobody till I've seen the master. I'll send him a telegram in the morning. And Mabel, you must never tell nobody neither. Swear it. If you ever tell a living soul what happened tonight, I'll see you never get a place again. Not ever." Her voice was vicious.

"I swear I won't tell." Mabel's face was scarlet.

"Good girl. Now give me another cup of tea."

Daylight found them still drinking tea. They had breakfast, and then, as soon as the post office was open, Mrs. Buskin went out and sent the telegram. . . .

PAUL and Rose arrived home in the late afternoon. As soon as Mrs. Buskin heard the master's key in the lock, she went into the hall. "Good evening, sir—good evening, ma'am," she said. "Tea is all ready."

Paul said: "Come in, Mrs. Buskin," and led the way into the drawing-room. He motioned to Mrs. Buskin to sit down. "Well? What's happened?"

Mrs. Buskin sat on the edge of her chair, hands clasped primly in her lap, and told her story. Neither Rose nor Paul spoke until she had finished.

Then Paul said: "But, Mrs. Buskin, what you imply is fantastic."

Rose said quickly: "Have you told the police?"

"No, ma'am. I said nothing to nobody until you came back."

"That was very wise of you," Paul said. "What about Mabel? Will she hold her tongue?"

"I've seen to Mabel," Mrs. Buskin said grimly. "She won't say nothing." She hesitated. "Will you be wanting me any more, sir?"

Paul looked at Mrs. Buskin's short, stout body and tired, lined face. What courage, what loyalty she had shown!

"Not at the moment, Mrs. Buskin," he said. He got up and opened the door for her. "You've been extraordinarily brave and tactful. We shall always be grateful."

He followed her out and went quickly up to his dressing-room, his thoughts racing. Someone had tried to break in. He still could not bring himself to believe that that someone could be Tom, but he remembered Tom admiring Rose's necklace, and the coincidence of two burned hands was too much to accept.

Hurriedly he opened the safe to make sure that the pearls were inside. Obviously, as the attempt to break in had failed, they could hardly have been missing, but he felt more reassured when he had seen them for himself. He closed the safe and carefully relocked it.

He went downstairs and out into the scullery. He looked at the hole in the door—and remembered Tom's interest in carpentry.

Then he returned to the drawing-room where Rose was sitting looking pale and worried. He sat down, and they went over Mrs. Buskin's story again.

"I must go to the police," Paul concluded. "I have a duty. The attempt failed, but even trying to break in is a criminal act. I can't allow personal feelings to enter into it."

Rose's eyes were wide with horror. "No, no!" she exclaimed. "Think of Mary. Besides, it isn't true. Why should Tom do a thing like that?"

"I don't know," Paul said. "It all seems mad, but the coincidence is too great. I must go to the police."

"Leave it for the moment," Rose begged him. "We'll think about it and talk about it. Some explanation may turn up." She paused. "Tomorrow I'll go and see Mary, to tell her how sorry I am about Tom's accident. That might help."

Next morning Rose went to The Maples. Mary looked different, her face unlit, as though someone had blown out a lamp. She was quite calm as she told Rose that she had called in a specialist who had recommended that Tom should go into a nursing home.

"He's going tonight," she said. "I know he'll be better looked after there, but it will be dreadful not to be with him when he's ill." Then she began to talk about the way it had happened. "I heard him stumble on the stairs. It woke me up. I put on the light and went on to the landing. I can't tell you what he looked like, half mad and holding his poor hand.

"I helped him back to our room. I wanted to call the doctor, but he wouldn't hear of it. He told me to dress his hand myself. I said it was far too badly burned for me to touch it, but he wouldn't listen. I cut away his coat sleeve and his shirt, and then the telephone rang.

"It was Mrs. Buskin. I don't know what she wanted. I didn't care. I wanted to get back to Tom. I undressed him somehow, then I soaked a big piece of silk in oil and wrapped it loosely round his hand. I didn't know what else to do.

"I asked him how it happened. He said he'd got up because he couldn't sleep and found the electric light wouldn't turn on, so he groped his way downstairs and found a candle in the hall. He went to the switch box to see if a fuse was gone. As he touched the box, he felt a pain shoot through his hand.

"He said he'd had a bad electric shock. I didn't know Tom knew anything about electricity. I didn't know he could mend a fuse. And the extraordinary thing is that the electrician could find nothing wrong with the lights or the fuse box, and none of the candles in the hall had been lit. What happened to him, Rose?"

Mary began to weep, and Rose took her in her arms. "Don't cry, Mary," she told her. "You did everything you could. It's all right. I know he'll be better soon."

Rose was uncomfortable about her visit to Mary. As she told Paul that evening, she didn't want to pry or spy. Yet every word that Mary uttered was evidence against Tom.

"I don't know what to do, Paul," she said. "I want to be with her when she's in trouble, but I can't let her tell me those things. And have you realized that, as soon as Tom is well enough, you'll have to go and see him?"

"If he ever is well enough," Paul said.

"Paul. You don't think he'll die?"

"He may. It might be the best solution."

"No—no. He may be innocent. Perhaps we're imagining the whole thing."

Once again, wearily, they discussed the facts. Then Paul said: "Anyway, I can't go and sit with Tom when he's ill, chat to him about all the damn silly things one does chat about, and then, one day when he's well, go and say: 'I think you're a thief.' I can't do it, Rose."

"All right," Rose said. "We'll go away. We'll stay away until he's well, and then you can do what you think best. We'll go and stay at Chelmsford with your father. He'll be delighted to have us, and you can come up to London every day. . . ."

They were away for ten days . . . long, anxious days for Paul. At the end of that time Rose had a letter from Mary saying that Tom was coming home. She said: "Tom needs Paul to talk to. He'll soon get tired of feminine society."

Dreading the interview, Paul made arrangements to return to Wimbledon.

He went to The Maples on the evening of his return. Tom was sitting up in bed, his right hand in a big leather glove, lying on the sheet. He looked pale and much thinner.

After a time he began to talk of the accident. He said: "It's utterly incomprehensible how it happened. The doctors are as mystified as I am."

Suddenly all the strain and worry rose like a bubble of anger in Paul's throat and burst. "I know what happened," he said. "Mrs. Buskin told me."

Through the thick lenses of Tom's spectacles it was impossible to see the expression of his eyes. The rest of his face was unchanged, and his voice sounded mildly astonished as he said: "Mrs. Buskin? How does she know anything about it?"

"She knows because she did it."

In short, stark sentences, Paul told Tom Mrs. Buskin's story. When he had finished there was a long pause, until Tom said in bewilderment: "Either Mrs. Buskin is raving mad or I am. What on earth are you telling me—that there were two of us with burned hands that night?" Then: "My God—you don't think I cut a hole in your scullery door? Paul!"

Relief surged through Paul. It was all right. Old Tom hadn't done it. They'd been fools to think he had.

He got up from the chair by the bed and went to the window. He stood looking out, ashamed to meet Tom's eyes. "It was such a coincidence," he murmured. "We were all strung up. Thank God it's all right now. Forgive me, old chap." Paul laughed. "You don't know what a relief this is; now I can go to the police without a qualm."

"They'll only laugh at you. They'll want to know why you didn't go at once."

"I'll tell them the whole story. No doubt they'll be able to sort it out."

Paul turned and walked towards the bed. Then he stopped short, brought to a standstill by what he saw. Great drops of sweat stood on Tom's forehead, his face was twisted, and he seemed to be trying to speak.

"Sit down," Tom whispered.

Paul sat down, his knees weak. "So it *was* you."

"An accident like that doesn't happen twice on the same night," Tom said dully. "The police would realize that in a moment." He paused for breath, his left hand pulling at the sheet. "They'd arrest me within twelve hours. You can't let them, Paul. It would kill Mary."

"You should have thought of that before."

Tom said: "I did it for Mary. I'd got to have money. She wanted it for her mothers and children. You don't understand what these people mean to her. When she realized she would never have children, she was broken. Life was utterly purposeless for her.

"When she began to help other

Your Garden and Mine

by PERCY THROWER

ONE of the difficulties in growing Amateur tomatoes is the tendency of the fruit to rot on the ground in wet weather. I prevent this by using wooden frames, six inches high, with wire netting tops. I place them over the young plants, which grow through the mesh, and when the bunches of fruit appear they are supported clear of the ground.

The framework, with a layer of straw on the wire mesh, can also be used in the garden shed in the autumn for laying out any green fruit for ripening. — H. SMITH, Merilies Close, Westcliff-on-Sea.

Bulbils from gladioli corms frequently fail to germinate. I have found that it helps if they are first soaked for twenty-four hours in a bowl of tepid water.

They should then be planted in a shallow trench and kept fairly moist throughout the summer.— MRS. B. M. TIPTON, Shelton Road, Shrewsbury.

PERCY THROWER says: This is a good idea for Amateur tomatoes. It will allow currents of warm air to get round the fruit and ripen it and will also make it easier to spray the plants.

Flowering corms should be produced in two years instead of three if Mrs. Tipton's hint is followed. The bulbils should be lifted in the autumn, dried, and planted again the following spring.

JOHN BULL pays five guineas each for the best original, topical gardening hints sent to Percy Thrower, JOHN BULL, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. No entry can be returned unless a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed.

OPINION—4

It is difficult, if not impossible, for most people to think otherwise than in the fashion of their own period.

G. Bernard Shaw

people's babies, it became her whole life—but, my God, it cost money! I've had to give up almost every penny I possessed. She doesn't know that. I don't worry her with financial problems. But that night we dined with you she asked for more money. I had to find it for her somehow, and then Rose was wearing her necklace." Tom raised himself suddenly on his pillows. "Paul, for her sake! You haven't lost the necklace—I was going to put it back. . . ."

Paul stared. Everything had been clear, painfully clear, up till now. But now Tom was talking nonsense. The necklace was there in the safe. Surely he could believe his own eyes?

"That evening when we dined with you," Tom was saying, "Rose gave you the pearls to put away. She said the case was on her dressing-table. I was tempted then. When I went to wash my hands I went into your room. I took the pearls.

"When I got home I was almost afraid to look at them. All next day I thought about them, and then I knew I couldn't go on with it. I had to get them back to you somehow. I got frantic about it, and knew I'd got to do it while you were away. So that night I tried to break in and return them, and your Mrs. Buskin—intervened."

Paul felt dazed. The irony of it all!

Firstly, that Mrs. Buskin's terrible act of retribution had fallen not on a man committing a crime but on a man in the act of repentance. Secondly, because the pearls Tom had stolen had been Rose's "birthday" pearls, which were of no real value at all.

He thought, confusedly: *Is there any point in telling him this? Will it make him feel any better?*

"Where is the necklace?" Paul asked gruffly.

"There, in the wardrobe. In the coat I was wearing that night. No one has touched it since Mary took it off me. *Is* it there?"

"Yes, it's here." Paul opened the case and looked blankly at the string of imitation pearls.

"You've got it back," Tom said. "Can't you leave it at that?" He turned his face away. "I'm a cripple. My right hand is useless, and the doctors say my heart is in a dangerous state—it never was very sound. I must do no more work involving any physical or mental strain. I've resigned from the insurance corporation."

He turned back to Paul, and his voice was pleading. "We're moving to a cottage in the country," Tom continued. "There'll be very little money. Mary's going to start a school. What good will it do to put me in prison?"

Paul felt sick. He still didn't know whether he ought to tell Tom the truth or not. In any case he couldn't face it now.

He got up. "I won't go to the police, and Mary will never know," he said abruptly. He turned and left the room.

Downstairs he spoke to Mary for a moment. Her eyes were full of tears. "It's a tragedy," she said. "Dear, good Tom, who never did any harm in all his life. It's cruel. But I'll look after him. I'll make it up to him somehow. . . ."

When Paul got back to The Laurels he went straight to the kitchen. Mrs. Buskin was rolling pastry.

"I've just been to see Mr. Foster," he said. "It looks as if he's going to be a permanent invalid. They're leaving here."

Mrs. Buskin lifted her pale eyes with their sandy lashes to his face for a moment. "Thank you, sir, I understand," she said. When he left the kitchen, she was rolling pastry again. It was impossible to guess what she was thinking.

To Rose he told the whole story. He handed her the pearls. She looked at them, and then she wept . . . Rose, who never cried. "Poor, poor Tom. And poor Mary. She'll be so unhappy."

Paul said: "No, she won't. She always wanted a child, something helpless to look after. That's what Tom will be to her now. . . ."

Late that night, Rose said: "Paul, can't we leave this house and take a place in the country? I don't want to go on living here now."

Paul nodded. "There's a wonderful new golf course at a place called Sunningdale. We could build a house there. Would you like that?"

"It sounds perfect. Then you can teach your son to play golf. He's decided to make his appearance in the summer. . . ."

At breakfast next morning Mrs. Buskin was very silent. Mabel took no notice. She was interested in her egg and bacon.

At last Mrs. Buskin heaved a sigh and spoke. "Mr. and Mrs. Foster are leaving here," she said. "I'm not surprised. It wasn't likely they'd want to stay after that to-do."

"Where'll they go?"

"How do I know? To the country, I shouldn't wonder. If you'll keep your mouth shut, I'll tell you something. You'll have to know one day. We'll be moving to the country, too—to Sunningdale. And the mistress is going to have a baby. I knew it the minute she came back. She had the pinched, dreamy look. Poor little dear."

"A baby!" Mabel exclaimed. "But, Mrs. Buskin, I don't think I want to go to the country."

"Don't talk silly," Mrs. Buskin said severely. "The country will be nicer for you. And when there's a nanny we'll have to have more staff. My cousin Janet's girl can be house maid. That means you'll be parlour maid. You don't want to be half and half all your life, do you?"

"No, Mrs. Buskin," said Mabel meekly. THE END

"It's my birthday"

Jill Day goes into battle singing

Continued from page 11

Turner, says: "She too easily barges in where angels fear to tread."

A girl with "visually more than most," with a bouncing, challenging walk and a brisk voice, Miss Day replies that she merely has the courage of her own convictions. She rejects advice. In the past, she has found that, no matter how good intentioned, it has usually proved faulty. "I prefer to make my own decisions, then I have only myself to blame."

Miss Day started seriously to chart her own somewhat wilful course in 1954. Then twenty-three and earning £40 a week, she had spent eight years in show business, mostly with dance bands. She now declined to go on tour any more with her employer, Geraldo. She said she wanted to make a name as a solo artist. Geraldo told her that he thought the move ill-advised but "gave me six months in which to make good or rejoin the band."

In the first three months she secured only three television performances, but they did not go unnoticed. When illness forced Joan Turner out of the London Adelphi show, *Talk Of The Town*, George and Alfred Black invited Miss Day to take her place alongside Jimmy Edwards and Tony Hancock. On the same day, a Rank film producer gave her a film test which resulted in her playing the title rôle in *All For Mary*, a comedy film generally well received. "At the end of my six months' probation, I had made out quite nicely on my own." Geraldo then became her manager.

For her latest B.B.C. series, *The Jill Day Show*, she insisted on writing her own scripts. "That way I know what I'm getting," she said. For her male lead she auditioned about fifty actors before finding the right man.

"When the critics attacked the script of the first show in the series," says Maurice Taylor, her manager, "I reminded Jill that I had advised her not to put her name to the script and only to take the credit if it succeeded. She was unrepentant. She said she wasn't afraid of being wrong."

Miss Day, who has resolved in future to concern herself only with the outline of her shows and to leave the dialogue to a professional writer, says: "Why should I ignore the critics and pretend that the bad notices never happened?"

It matches the rest of Miss Day's personality that she prizes honesty. "A person must be honest with himself, recognize his limitations and act within them. He must be honest with the world. I like straightforward people."

Some time ago, a well-known London suburban theatre booked Miss Day for a week and on the Monday morning she duly arrived for rehearsals. The musical director proposed that the orchestra should accompany her through her performance once.

"Any little points we can iron out after tonight's shows," he said.

"I don't work that way," she said. "I iron out little points at rehearsals."

"But we haven't time."

"If you're concerned about paying the orchestra overtime," said Miss Day. "I'll pay it."

The row which developed after that has become almost legendary in show business, partly because no one remembers any other artist ever daring to argue with the musical director. Miss Day got her way, naturally.

Though opinions of Miss Day as an individual vary from the glowing to the glowering, assessments of her as a performer are fairly consistent. Ten years "going through the show business mill" have turned her into a highly polished professional.

"She always gives a good and distinctive performance," says Ernest Maxin, a B.B.C. producer. "She has a versatile voice, capable of handling most songs. And she can act." One criticism made of her is that she has "insufficient power of sympathetic appeal." A leading theatrical agent praised a recent television performance by her but added: "She lacks heart."

Yvonne Page, alias Jill Page, alias Jill Day, is the eldest of three children of William Page, a Brighton bookmaker, and his wife, Phyllis. As evidence of her family's all-round fighting spirit, she says that her father has "won and lost three fortunes on the horses" and that "Mother once pushed a man who offended her into a swimming-pool."

Born on December 5, 1930, Yvonne Page took dancing lessons from the age of four. "For as far back as I can remember I wanted to go on the stage." At fifteen, she travelled to London alone and had a successful audition as a singer before the band-leader, Harry Roy. With an aunt as chaperon, she worked for Roy for six months, then returned home "tired of one-night stands around the country."

For a time she went to a secretarial college before getting a part in the chorus of the Arthur Askey show, *Follow The Girls*. She then became an understudy in *Piccadilly Hayride*, worked in a summer show at Brighton and returned to dance band singing with Syd Dean and his orchestra. A year later, early in 1950, Sydney Simone took her to the Café de Paris. That engagement ended abruptly after six weeks.

During the year's wait for her court action against Simone, she worked in cabaret in Paris for six months and in Madrid for six weeks. Soon after the action, Geraldo employed her and changed her name, "and with it the course of my career," to Jill Day.

Of slim and shapely build, Miss Day is five feet one and a half inches tall and naturally dark-haired. She lives in London in a two-room untidy flat near Hyde Park. She has few friends and spends most of her spare time at home. She needs, she says, ten hours sleep a day at least.

Recently, she has leased a larger flat near Marble Arch for the day later this year when she plans to marry quietly Douglas Robinson, a freelance saxophone player. Her current professional ambition is to secure more star parts in films.

At Brighton, the Page family regard their celebrated relative as a split personality. Her sister, Virginia, explains: "In London, Jill is hard-headed and sharp when I visit her. At home, she's childlike." A close friend put it this way: "She's a mixture, a little girl and a dominant old gentleman."

At home, Miss Day has often indulged in such whims as the purchase of a racehorse, which her father described as "a bag of bones." To curb such extravagances and, more especially, to control her now considerable income, Miss Day recently appointed a business man as her business manager and formed a company which pays her a wage of £20 a week.

Her parents and her brother and sister declare that beneath Miss Day's armour lies a puckish sense of humour. Indeed, Miss Day sometimes uses it as part of her armour. Once, she and several other artists gave a live outside-broadcast television show from a naval establishment. Afterwards the captain, who had not seen the show, invited them and his officers to his quarters for refreshments. He turned to Miss Day and said: "Do forgive me, but what is your name?" She told him.

"And what do you do?"

"I'm a trapeze artist," she said. The rest of the room, who knew better, suddenly hushed. To their silent amusement, Miss Day proceeded to befool the captain about her work on the flying trapeze.

"For his bad manners as a host," she says, "he thoroughly deserved all he got." THE END

OPINION—5

Public opinion is no more than this: what people think that other people think.

Alfred Austin

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"BULLETS" No. 2,082—FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Car for Easter Weekend: G. H. Smith, 52 Edinburgh Road, Wellingborough, Northants:

Example: **Under The Red Stain**
Bullet: **In White Letters—"Slow"!**

£25: M. McLuskie, 36 Broomlands Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire: A World In Two—Plus H-bomb, Minus *Man*? £10: Mrs. I. W. Noble, 78 Wessex Road, Sherford Camp, Taunton: Shrinking—As Strikes "Stretch"—Contracts! OTHER AWARDS. £9: Mrs. E. Weightman, 20 Ashley Road, Worksop: Hole In The Ice—Where Gentle Words "Fell." £8: S. Dutton, 2 Links Road, Heywood, Lancs: Shrinking—Our Savings? Our *Say*! £7: W. I. Roberts, 55 Hannah Street, Porth, Rhondda: Struggling With My —Worse Side, Better Half! £6: J. S. Jenkinson, 85 Hazelhurst Road, Worsley, Walkden, Manchester: In Nobody's Footsteps—That's Calder's "Giant Stride"! £5: W. H. Burden, 49 Alton Road, Wallisdown, Bournemouth: Back To London—And Washington—And "Closer"! £5: A. T. A. Frost, 38 Coniston Avenue, Headington, Oxford: Fewer Slowcoaches—Or Prosperity "Ghost Train"! £5: A. S. Pattison, 43 Fines Road, Medomsley, Consett, Co. Durham: In Raleigh's Footsteps —Alfie's Following—He's *Smoking*!

For ten winners of £2 10s. see *"Bullets" Bulletin*. 1,500 new 2-in-1 Awards have also been posted.

THIS WAY TO WIN—ADD 2, 3 or 4 WORDS to any "EXAMPLE"

HERE'S how to shape a *Bullet*. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any *Example* from list on right. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright *Bullet*. Post coupon below by MONDAY, APRIL 29.

Thanks To The Budget	Tied Hand And Foot
Rocks Ahead	Knock After Knock
To Bind The Commonwealth	On The Never-never
Man's Opportunity	Auntie's Romantic, So
Revolt In The Factory	The Fun Began When
Makes Life Worth Living	Trying It On
Incentive's Carrot	A Family
Over The Ocean	Before She's Finished
Crumbling	Gets My Back Up
Tonic For The Doctor	If We'd More Sense

Last six *Examples* are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice — then make your *Bullet* as usual

To Stop The.....	Given A New.....
Bowled ..... Out	Looking For A.....
..... Relations	Led .....Astray

EXAMPLE .....
BULLET
EX. .....
B.
EX. .....
B.
EX. .....
B.
EX. .....
B.

10-in-1 BONUS Grand 10-in-1 Surprise Parcel accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of five or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet

2,087 Closing Postmark MON., APRIL 29

I agree to rules and enclose P.O. entry-fee at the rate of 6d. per *Bullet*.

Signed.....
Address.....

P.O. Value .....
No. .....

ENTRY FEE 6d. PER "BULLET"

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per *Bullet*. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to John Bull, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in John Bull dated May 25), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.
(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, May 11, for early news of No. 2,087 result.)

POST ENTRY
"Bullets" 2,087, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.99

GET YOUR NEW "BULLETIN"
WITH PULL-OUT COUPON SUPPLEMENT

Stick 2½d. stamp on this coupon (which you can enclose with your entry) for the new 4-in-1 *"Bullets" Bulletin*, dated May 4, containing coupons for *Bullets* 2,089, 2,090, 2,091 and 2,092.

Name.....
Address.....
848

STICK 2½d. STAMP here for *"Bulletin"*

GRAND CRUISE OFFER NEXT WEEK!

HÆMORRHOIDS

"cleared up immediately"

—with tablets you take like aspirins

A Londoner, who wanted to be free from haemorrhoids "for at least a while", bought a packet of Hemotabs and now writes:
"*. . . with the idea of being free from haemorrhoids for at least a while, I bought a packet of your tablets . . . The trouble cleared up immediately, and I have had no recurrence since then.*"—F.J.
Hemotabs are an entirely new treatment for haemorrhoids. You take these tablets with a glass of water—like an aspirin.

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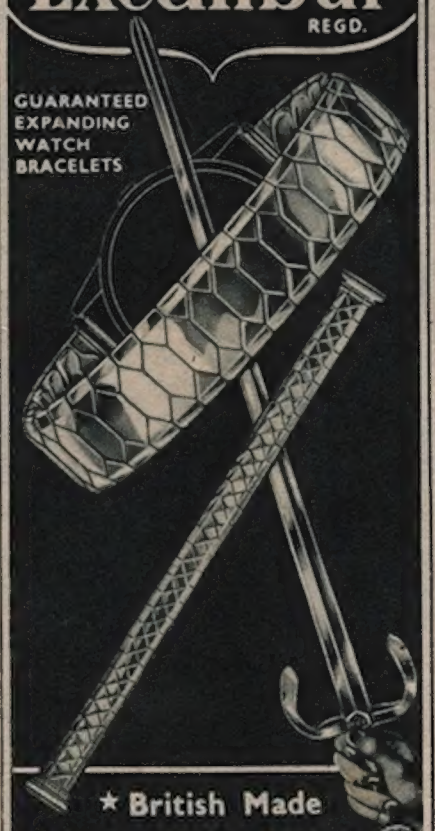
HEMOTABS

Excalibur REGD.

GUARANTEED EXPANDING WATCH BRACELETS



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★ In 9ct. Gold, Rolled Gold or Stainless Steel
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Beware of NERVOUS INDIGESTION

When your stomach is out of order, be quite sure of the cause before you start taking remedies. Work and worry often cause a lot of nervous indigestion, and the only way to end this is to rebuild and restore your nerves.

Unless your diet contains enough Vitamin B, your digestion will suffer; you will become headachy, irritable, sleep badly, and show all the signs of a nervous collapse.

Make sure you get enough Vitamin B. Take Phillips Tonic Yeast tablets with your meals. Brewers' yeast is the richest natural source of the B vitamins and Phillips Tonic Yeast is pure Brewers' yeast in concentrated form.

Start taking Phillips Tonic Yeast today. You will sleep better, be less easily upset, less worried and depressed, and your digestion will improve. But be sure to ask for 'Phillips' Tonic Yeast. It is the finest yeast with all its cells intact and without any drugs or harmful ingredients. At all chemists, 1/9, 4/- and 6/6.

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Who would suggest that a woman's life hasn't got its own problems, particularly those of her health?

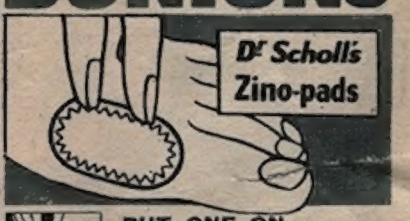
That is why thousands of women are turning to Juno-Junipah. Juno-Junipah is different from ordinary salts. It contains not only valuable mineral salts but also pure oil of Juniper. And it is gentle. It clears away, without any drastic purging, impurities which help to make complexions muddy and to bring on Sick Headaches, Bilious Attacks, Aches in the Back, and Rheumatic troubles like Lumbago and Sciatica.

Just try Juno-Junipah! You'll be surprised how soon you begin to feel better and look better, too. Your aches and pains will be relieved, your complexion and looks will improve and you'll look and feel years younger.

Get some from any chemist today.

If you prefer, the Juno-Junipah formula has been adapted to make pleasant little tablets. Ask your chemist for them.

BUNIONS



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